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SCIENTIFIC, GEOGRAPHICAL, HISTORICAL, AND HOMILETIC,
GATHERED FROM A WIDE RANGE OF HOME AND
FOREIGN LITERATURE, ON THE VERSES
OF THE BIBLE.

BY

✓
REV. JOSEPH S. EXELL, M.A.



LEVITICUS.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BOOK.—The historical importance of the Book of Leviticus is very great. One might as well expect to understand the history of Greece, while remaining in ignorance of philosophy and art, or of England, while knowing nothing whatever of parliament and the constitution as to understand the history of Israel without a knowledge of the Hebrew ritual. Think how much labour is spent in the study of the classical mythology at our schools and universities, not for any value there is in itself, but for the light it throws upon classical literature; and yet how little do Christian people realise the importance of studying the modes of worship among the Jews, in order to understand their literature, which is our Bible! And besides, not only is the knowledge of the Tabernacle worship necessary in order to understand the sacred literature, but it is of real value in itself; not merely of antiquarian and psychological value, like the ancient mythologies, but of present practical value, as throwing light upon the New Testament and illustrating that gospel on which our hopes are founded. This Book of Leviticus, like the Tabernacle itself, is rough and unattractive on the outside, and may even provoke the sneers of the mere passers-by; but it is all glorious within, and to those who with reverent feet enter its portal, there will be unfolded no inconsiderable amount of "the unsearchable riches of Christ." There are the rough "badgers' skins" without; but within there is the glory of gold and the beauty of "the fine twined linen, with blue and purple and scarlet, and cherubims cunningly wrought." (*J. M. Gibson, D.D.*)

THE UNITY, DESIGN, AND CONTENTS OF THE BOOK.—This Book is marked on the surface with these elements of unity; it is all centred in the newly-erected Tabernacle; and only a few weeks passed away between its beginning and its close. There is necessarily much variety in so considerable a collection of laws, and something of historical narrative in connection with the immediate application of those laws; but the main purpose is everywhere apparent and controlling—the arrangements whereby a sinful people may approach, and remain in permanent communion with a holy God. This will better appear in the following table of contents. The arrangement of the Book is as systematic as the nature of its contents allowed. In regard to one or two alleged instances of repetition (chap. xi. 39, 40 compared with chap. xxii. 8; and chap. xix. 9 with chap. xxiii. 22) it is sufficient to say that they were intentional; and in regard to several chapters supposed to be placed out of their natural connection (as, *e.g.*, chaps. xii. and xv.), it simply does not appear that the thread of connection in the mind of Moses was the same as in that of the critic. In fact, in the instances alleged, the great Legislator seems to have taken especial pains to break that connection which is now spoken of as the natural one, and has thus, for important reasons, separated the purification after child-birth from all other purifications which might otherwise have seemed to be of the same character. Nevertheless, it is to be remembered that Leviticus was given at Sinai in view of an immediate and direct march to Canaan, which should have culminated in the possession of the Promised Land. When this had been prevented in consequence of

the sin of the people, a long time—above thirty-eight years—passed away before the encampment on the plains of Moab. During this period the law was largely in abeyance, as is shown by the fact that its most imperative requirement, circumcision, was entirely omitted to the close (Josh. v. 5-8). After this long interval it is not unreasonable to suppose that the writings of Moses would have been revised before his death, and such clauses and exhortations added as the changed circumstances might require. These passages, however, if really written at that time, so far from being in any degree incongruous with the original work, do but fill out and emphasise its teachings. The contents of Leviticus are arranged in the following table in such a way as to show something of the connection of its parts:

BOOK I. OF APPROACH TO GOD (chaps. i.-xvi.).—*First part. Laws of sacrifice* (chaps. i.-vii.).—1. General rules for the sacrifices (chaps. i.-vi. 7). (1) Burnt-offerings (chap. i.). (2) Oblations (meat-offerings) (chap. ii.). (3) Peace-offerings (chap. iii.). (4) Sin-offerings (chaps. iv.-v. 13). (5) Trespass-offerings (chaps. v. 14-vi. 7). 2. Special instructions chiefly for the priests (chaps. vi. 8-vii. 38). (1) For burnt-offerings (chap. vi. 8-13). (2) For oblations (meat-offerings) (chap. vi. 14-23). (3) For sin-offerings (chap. vi. 24-30). (4) For trespass-offerings (chap. vii. 1-6). (5) For the priests' portion of the above (chap. vii. 7-10). (6) For peace-offerings in their variety (chap. vii. 11-21). (7) For the fat and the blood (chap. vii. 22-27). (8) For the priests' portion of peace-offerings (chap. vii. 28-36). (9) Conclusion of this section (chap. vii. 37, 38). *Second part. Historical* (chaps. viii.-x.).—1. The consecration of the priests (chap. viii.). 2. Entrance of Aaron and his sons on their office (chap. ix.). 3. The sin and punishment of Nadab and Abihu (chap. x.). *Third part. The laws of purity* (chaps. xi.-xv.).—1. Laws of clean and unclean food (chap. xi.). 2. Laws of purification after child-birth (chap. xii.). 3. Laws concerning leprosy (chaps. xiii., xiv.). (1) Examination and its result (chap. xiii. 1-46). (2) Leprosy in clothing and leather (chap. xiii. 47-59). (3) Cleansing and restoration of a leper (chap. xiv. 1-32). (4) Leprosy in a house (chap. xiv. 33-53). (5) Conclusion (chap. xiv. 54-57). 4. Sexual impurities and cleansings (chap. xv.). *Fourth part. The Day of Atonement* (chap. xvi.).

BOOK II. OF CONTINUANCE IN COMMUNION WITH GOD (chaps. xvii.-xxvi.).—*First part. Holiness on the part of the people* (chaps. xvii.-xx.).—1. Holiness in regard to food (chap. xvii.). 2. Holiness of the marriage relation (chap. xviii.). 3. Holiness of conduct towards God and man (chap. xix.). 4. Punishment for unholiness (chap. xx.). *Second part. Holiness on the part of the priests, and holiness of the offerings* (chaps. xxi., xxii.). *Third part. Sanctification of feasts* (chaps. xxiii.-xxv.).—1. Of the sabbaths and annual feasts (chap. xxiii.). 2. Of the holy lamps and shewbread (chap. xxiv. 1-9). 3. Historical. The punishment of a blasphemer (chap. xxiv. 10-23). 4. Of the sabbatical and jubilee years (chap. xxv.). *Fourth part. Conclusion.*—Promises and threats (chap. xxvi.). *Appendix.*—Of vows (xxvii.). (Prof. F. Gardiner.)

THE RELATION OF THE LEVITICAL CODE TO HEATHEN USAGES.—Widely divergent views have been held by different writers upon this subject. Spencer was disposed to find an Egyptian origin for almost every Mosaic institution. Baehr has sought to disprove all connection between them. The *à priori* probability seems well expressed by Marsham: "We know from Scripture that the Hebrews were for a long time inhabitants of Egypt; and we may suspect, not without reason, that they did not wholly cast off Egyptian usages, but rather that some traces of Egyptian habit remained. Many laws of Moses are from ancient customs. Whatever hindered the *cultus* of the true Deity he strictly forbid. Moses abrogated most of the Egyptian rites, some he changed, some he held as indifferent, some he permitted, and even commanded." Yet this legislation by its many additions and omissions, and the general remoulding of all that remained, became, as Rosenmueller remarks, peculiarly and distinctively Hebrew, adapted to their needs, and sharply separating them from all other people. It can scarcely be necessary to speak of what the Mosaic Law taught in common with the customs of all people at this period of the world's history. The aim of the law was to elevate the Israelites to a higher and better standard, but gently, and as they were able to bear it. Certain essential laws were given, and these were insisted upon absolutely and with every varied form of command which could add to the emphasis. The unity of God and His omnipotence, were taught with a distinctness which was fast fading out from the world's recollection, and which we scarcely find elsewhere at this period except in the Book of Job, which may itself have been modified in Mosaic hands. So, too, the necessity

of outward sacramental observance for the whole people, whereby communion with God through His Church should be maintained, were strongly insisted upon, as in Circumcision and the Passover, and other sacrifices. But when we come to consider the conduct of the ordinary life, we find the universally received customs of the times not abrogated, but only restrained and checked according to the capacity of the people. All these checks and restraints were in the direction of, and looking towards, the higher standard of the morality of the gospel, as may be seen in the law of revenge, where unlimited vengeance was restricted to a return simply equal to the injury received; in the laws of marriage, which imposed many restrictions on the freedom of divorce and of polygamy; in the laws of slavery, which so greatly mitigated the hardships of that condition. But in these, as in many other matters, their Heavenly Father dealt tenderly with His people, and "for the hardness of their hearts" suffered many things which were yet contrary to His will. The same general principles apply to the retention among them of very much of Egyptian custom and law. It is more important to speak of these because the Israelites lived so long and in such close contact with the Egyptians from the very time of their beginning to multiply into a nation until the eve of the promulgation of the Sinaitic legislation. It is only necessary here to point out on the one hand how apparent *lacunæ* in the Mosaic teaching may thus be explained, and on the other how largely the Egyptian *cultus* itself had already been modified, in all probability, by the influence of the fathers of the Jewish people. By consideration of the former it is seen, *e.g.*, why so little should have been said in the Mosaic writings of immortality and the future life. This doctrine was deeply engraven in the Egyptian mind, and interwoven as a fundamental principle with their whole theology and worship. It passed on to the Israelites as one of those elementary truths so universally received that it needed not to be dwelt upon. The latter is necessarily involved in more obscurity; but when we consider the terms on which Abraham was received by the monarch of Egypt; the position occupied at a later date by Jacob; the rank of Joseph, and his intermarriage with the high-priestly family; and remember at the same time that the priesthood of Egypt was still in possession of a higher and purer secret theology than was communicated to the people—we see how Israel could have accepted from the land of the Pharaohs an extent of customs (to be purified, modified, and toned by their own Sinaitic legislation) which it might have been dangerous to receive from any other people. Yet plainly, whatever of detail may have been adopted from Egyptian sources, it was so connected and correlated in the Mosaic legislation that the whole spirit of the two systems became totally unlike. (*Ibid.*)

THE SPIRITUAL MEANING OF THE BOOK.—That so elaborate a ritual looked beyond itself we cannot doubt. It was a prophecy of things to come; a shadow whereof the substance was Christ and His Kingdom. We may not always be able to say what the exact relation is between the type and the antitype. Of many things we may be sure that they belonged only to the nation to whom they were given, containing no prophetic significance, but serving as witnesses and signs to them of God's covenant of grace. We may hesitate to pronounce with Jerome, that "every sacrifice, nay, almost every syllable—the garments of Aaron and the whole Levitical system—breathe of heavenly mysteries." But we cannot read the Epistle to the Hebrews and not acknowledge that the Levitical priests "served the pattern and type of heavenly things"—that the sacrifices of the law pointed to and found their interpretation in the Lamb of God—that the ordinances of outward purification signified the true inner cleansing of the heart and conscience from dead works to serve the living God. One idea, moreover, penetrates the whole of this vast and burdensome ceremonial, and gives it a real glory even apart from any prophetic significance. Holiness is its end. Holiness is its character. The Tabernacle is holy—the vessels are holy—the offerings are most holy unto Jehovah—the garments of the priests are holy. All who approach Him whose name is "Holy," whether priests who minister unto Him or people who worship Him, must themselves be holy. It would seem as if, amid the camp and dwellings of Israel, was ever to be heard an echo of that solemn strain which fills the courts above, where the seraphim cry one unto another, Holy, Holy, Holy. (*Bp. Perowne, in Smith's Dict. of Bible.*)

IT SHADOWS FORTH THE GOSPEL.—Sometimes in a shadow we may see details of workmanship which otherwise in the substance we might have missed. One of the

most wonderful achievements of the present day is sun-photography, by which photographs are obtained of the sun-disc, under certain conditions. And it is obviously much easier to investigate the nature of the sun from such photographs than to study it amid the unbearable glory of his presence. The eye may quietly pursue its investigations undazzled and unabashed. So we may better understand some of the details of Christ's work, as we study Leviticus, than when we stand with the apostles amid the marvels of the Cross, or with the seer amid the supernal blaze of Apocalyptic vision. Turn not lightly, then, from the Book of Leviticus, which shadows forth the gospel; and, indeed, gives much of the terminology, the phrases and symbols, to be afterwards employed. And beneath the teaching of the same Holy Spirit as taught Moses of old, explore the sacred meanings which underlie ark and propitiatory; fine twined linen and blue; candlestick and table; altar of incense and altar of burnt-offering; basin and vessel and snuffer. Each is like a hook in the Divine household, to which God has attached a sacred meaning, and which will yield up its secret to those who reverently ask, and seek, and knock. Adapting some memorable words we may say: "The invisible things of God from the construction of the Tabernacle are clearly seen, being understood by the things that were made, even His eternal purpose of redemption." (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*)

WAS THE RELIGION OF ISRAEL A REVELATION OR A MERELY HUMAN DEVELOPMENT?—What were the salient features of the religion of Israel as compared with other religions of the ancient world? Nowhere else is there the same recognition at once of the unity of the Supreme Being, of His separation from and yet constant government over His creation, and of the consequent relations of duty and love on the part of man towards Him. Single philosophers in various nations and at various times, as Confucius or Buddha, Zoroaster or Plato, in some of these points rose to higher and better conceptions than their contemporaries; but confessedly, the religion proclaimed with authority to the whole people of Israel was immeasurably superior to that made known to any other ancient nation. For this fact there must be a cause. A theory proposed for acceptance is this: Some germs of this higher religion were handed down from very ancient times, here and there accepted and improved by the wiser and more spiritual among the people, gradually worked over by the enlightened prophets of Israel in the face of much opposition, and finally adopted by the people in the erroneous belief that such had been the faith of their fathers. We need not stop to ask how it happened that, among this particular people, so obstinately given, like their contemporaries, to polytheism and idolatry, such a long succession of enlightened prophets, teaching as with one voice, should have arisen. The theory itself does not meet the facts. The tradition that the religion of Amos and Isaiah was, in all its essential features, the religion also of Abraham and Moses was deeply imbedded in all the literature of Israel, and, what is, perhaps, still more important, in all their "folk-lore." Assign what dates we please to the narratives of Genesis and Exodus, make even the reality-breathing stories of Abraham and Joseph and Moses mere legends and myths, if one can, there yet remains in these very legends and in every record by which we may look into the deepest convictions of the people, the consciousness that they were a nation chosen out of the whole earth by the Lord to receive certain revelations and promises from Him, bound to Him by peculiar ties, intended to fulfil certain purposes of His, and under the obligation of certain duties towards Him. How is this to be accounted for? Again, another difficulty with this theory is, that the essential basis of the religion of Israel is not one which admits of the sort of growth supposed. We might imagine a worship of the separate powers of nature gradually superseded by a recognition of the unity of nature, and so of one universal, underlying force, although historically such a process has tended rather to pantheism than to monotheism. But in Israel the first notes that are heard at all are of solitary supremacy. The fundamental utterance alike of command, of history, of popular song, through all the previous ages, is summed up in the words of Isaiah (xlii. 8), "I am the Lord, . . . My glory will I not give to another." The ten commandments form the very gist and kernel of the Hebrew religion, and are acknowledged by all critics to be a part of its most ancient statutes. They belonged to Israel when just emerging from a servile condition and when bent upon having a golden calf for their god; yet they open with the absolute and uncompromising command: "I am the Lord thy God: thou shalt have none other gods but Me." Other nations were more powerful, more numerous, more wealthy, more advanced in the arts; but in religion they stood on a lower plane. The only

escape from the enormous difficulties of supposing such an evolution among the ancient Israelites is in the recognition of a revelation, and such revelation is entirely in accordance with the character of a loving and Almighty Father. The religion of Israel did not stop with the bare assertion of the unity of God. It insisted equally upon His absolute holiness and His benevolence. Here it was still more widely separated from other religions of antiquity. Is it probable that the Israelites, of all people in the world, developed this conception unaided? It is alleged that even among them this conception was very imperfect, that the sacred books attribute to God human passions and imperfections unworthy of this ideal, and put into His mouth commands of savage cruelty and revenge. The simple answer to this allegation is, that it is not true. God did indeed allow slavery, while greatly mitigating its hardships. He suffered divorce and polygamy, while imposing many restraints upon its license. He tolerated revenge, and even required a penalty equal to the injury in judicial judgments. But in all these things the same Scriptures taught that this was suffered for the time because of the hardness of men's hearts. Man cannot be suddenly lifted from a very low to a high spiritual level. He must be raised little by little, as children are trained. But it is further said that men were "raised up by the Spirit of the Lord" for the deliverance of Israel, like Ehud, Samson, and others, who did very strange and very wicked things. These men were raised up for a noble purpose, but in the execution of it they were guided by their own imperfect light and erring judgment, and perhaps often swayed far more than they knew by human passion. But besides these there were men "after God's own heart," whom He loved and blessed, and yet who were guilty of very abominable crimes. "What," it is asked, "was the holiness which could bear with such things?" But is God to be held responsible for every ill-advised or even wrong act which a man may do who has set out with an earnest desire to serve Him? Do we now reduce our conception of the holiness of our Heavenly Father to the level of the imperfect lives of those who profess to serve Him? Then why should we do so in judging of those far-away ages? There is really no difficulty in any of the things alleged when the story is read in the light of the times to which it belongs. The difficulties only become insoluble when the narratives and commands are supposed to have been written in a later and more enlightened age. But however these things may be, and whatever difficulties may arise from the lives of the saints of old, or from things suffered or commanded in dealing with the hardness of men's hearts, everywhere in the sacred books God Himself appears in unutterable and perfect holiness. Only in Israel is the first and greatest of all the commandments, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deut. vi. 5); and nowhere else do we find failure in this authoritatively recognised as a moral offence, as sin. Is it more probable that the sages of Israel worked out this deepest of all relations from their own understanding and embodied it in their earliest law, or that they were taught it from on high? Closely related with the idea of sin was the practice of sacrifice. This practice, whencesoever derived, was substantially universal in the ancient world. The Hebrew sacrifices, however, are so distinguished from those of other nations in two points as to make them an essentially different institution. 1. Elsewhere sacrifice might be offered by any one, without regard to his character; and—2. It was customary to increase the value of the offering—even to the extent sometimes of providing human victims—in proportion to the magnitude of the offence. The underlying idea, therefore, of these sacrifices, was the offering to the offended Deity an equivalent for the offence—a *quid pro quo*, a compensation for the wrong done—so that no further penalty could justly be exacted. Hence there was very little of a moral character about the transaction. In Israel it was far otherwise. Sacrifices were allowed by the law only for "sins of ignorance"—rather of inadvertence, of carelessness, of being led away by temptation and passion; for sins committed with a "high hand," with a full knowledge of their wrongfulness and the defiance of a proud heart, no sacrifice was allowed (Numb. xv. 30; Deut. xvii. 12). This fact alone gives a totally different character to sacrifice in the two cases, because it introduces a moral element, and makes their acceptance depend upon motive and character. The second point is, if possible, still more distinctive. While the idea of sacrificial compensation was carried out among the heathen by proportioning the number and value of the victims to the greatness of the offence, nothing of this kind was so much as allowed by the Hebrew law. The sin-offering in every case must be the same, the she-goat—the commonest and cheapest of the domestic animals. Whole burnt-offerings might

be increased, and peace-offerings, those feasts of communion with God, might be indefinitely multiplied; but for the atoning sin-offering only and always the same simple victim. The lesson hereby taught is plain: sacrifices in themselves had no compensatory value. The value of sacrifices therefore could be but symbolic. Now, to suppose such a system of sacrifice, so unlike that of any other nation, so far-reaching in its meaning, and yet so adapted to a spiritually debased people, keeping alive in them the sense of sin and yet pointing to something better as the true atonement for sin—to suppose such a system to have been evolved by the philosophers of Judea and adopted by the Jews, seems by many degrees more improbable than that it was given them from on high. In the Hebrew religion the ground of man's acceptance with God was neither sacrifice nor ceremonial observance, though these were required, but faith—a trust in God, bringing the whole heart and life into dependence upon Him and harmony with His will. The gospel teaches that this is the essential principle of all true religion; but how did Israel know it? Here and there the truth was more or less clearly seen by one and another of the sages of antiquity; in Israel it was the fundamental teaching by the most varied teachers during more than a millennium of most changing fortune. How were those rude ages and those rough men of action able to grasp that principle which, even in our times, it has ever proved so difficult to keep alive in the hearts of men? It seems almost an insult to the understanding to ask whether it could have been a merely human development. It does not matter how little or how much the ordinary Hebrew may have recognised and acted upon this principle. It avails nothing to say that the men who illustrate it were remarkable and exceptional. The point is, that whether the people heard, or whether they forbore, this was the teaching of their religion. And there is no parallel to it elsewhere in the world. It may be objected that this must be a partial representation, since the religion of Israel was confessedly so largely ceremonial. But there was certainly no ceremonial law down to the time of Moses; and if (which the objectors deny) it was given then, it could have been but slightly observed during the wanderings in the wilderness, since even its fundamental rite of circumcision was neglected during this whole period (Josh. v. 2-7); further, it must have been largely in abeyance during the troubled time of the Judges; and it certainly could not have been carried out during the separation of the ark and the Tabernacle in the reigns of Saul and David. Thus its full observance only became possible after the building of Solomon's temple, leaving, at the most, but two centuries before the voice of the prophets begins clearly to exalt the inward disposition of the heart above the outward forms of the ritual. It is impossible, chronologically, that the ceremonial law could, for any great length of time, have obscured the higher teaching of faith; and during this short period there were, on the one hand, some spiritual leaders, and on the part of the people continual opposition and revolt against the law. The general result, therefore, cannot have been very deeply affected in those early times by the ceremonial law; and even the law itself, as has been seen in regard to the sacrifices and as is equally true in other points, was but a guard arranged to prevent apostasy from the principle of faith. The ceremonial law has formed the gist of recent controversies about the antiquity of the religious system of the Israelites. "If," it is asked, "the fundamental principle of that system was so true and spiritual, how came it to be overlaid by a mass of detailed and often petty precepts, by a rigid and elaborate ritual, and by a sternly fixed priestly hierarchy?" Two answers have been given. One is that of St. Paul, that the law "was added because of transgressions" (Gal. iii. 19), and that it "was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ" (Gal. iii. 24); the other, put forward by certain recent critics, is, that it was a gradual growth of ordinances under the influence of men who had usurped priestly power and functions. They maintain that while certain germs of it may have been handed down from very ancient times, it had its formal beginning about the reign of Josiah, and received its great development during the Babylonian captivity, especially under the influence of the prophet-priest, Ezekiel, but did not take its final shape until the remnant of the people had returned and been settled again in their ancestral land. Without here entering into the question of the reliability of the history, it is sufficient to say that while St. Paul's statement gives a clear and satisfactory view of the whole matter, an examination of the theory of the critics will show it to be improbable and self-destructive. In the first place, with what purpose in view could men have worked out such an elaborate system as the Levitical law? There are many instances of arrogant hierarchical systems among ancient nations as well as in corrupt forms of Christianity; but in all the

system has ministered to the wealth or to the power of the priesthood by whom it is upheld. Now the fact stares us in the face that at no period of history, until long after the captivity, were the priests of Israel either a wealthy or a powerful body. At the outset, it was not Aaron, but Moses who was chosen to be the leader and lawgiver of the people; and Aaron, though high priest, was in a wholly subordinate position. He and his descendants, and the whole tribe of Levi, were cut off from inheritance with their fellow tribes in the division of land, except mere cities of residence scattered among the other tribes. For their support the tithes of the increase of the other tribes was assigned to the Levites, and from them in turn the priests were to receive their tithes and also certain portions of the sacrifices. This seems, at first sight, an ample provision, and to have given the Levites a larger income than their brethren. But how was the collection of these tithes to be enforced? For this there was no other provision whatever than the influence of moral obligation. What would be the revenue of a modern state and the salaries of its officers if the payment of taxes rested only upon men's sense of duty? In truth, all the incidental notices of the Levites, down to the time of David, represent them as poor, and as easily tempted to sacrifice the purity of their religion for the merest support, and they are spoken of in the law as objects for the charity of the people. If, then, the Levitical law was devised by the priests, it was so devised in opposition to all experience of human nature as to bring to themselves neither wealth nor power. They exerted a certain moral influence, and sometimes were advisers of the kings, as, *e.g.*, Abiathar was to David, under very peculiar circumstances; yet even in this case the prophets Nathan and Gad appear to have had more influence, and Abiathar was at last deposed altogether from the high priesthood by Solomon. Peculiar circumstances gave Jehoiada great power over the youthful Joash, but when the old high priest died his successors could not keep Joash from apostasy (2 Chron. xxiv. 17, &c.), and it was not to the priests but to the prophet Zechariah that the fatal duty was entrusted of remonstrating with him for his sin (2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 22). When we come down to the times of the writing prophets, represented on the theory of the critics as teachers of a more spiritual religion which the priests were perverting to ceremonialism, two of the greater of them, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and we know not how many of the minor, were themselves priests. Further, in all the charges brought against the priests for their sins, the acquisition of power is not mentioned. On the return from the captivity Ezra is prominent in the organisation of the restored state; but it is more in his capacity as a scribe, learned in the law, than as a priest, and even so, he is entirely subordinate to Nehemiah, the civil governor. The theory, then, that the Levitical law was gradually developed by the priests for their own benefit, is plainly insufficient and not in accordance with the facts. Before taking up the other answer, given by St. Paul, a rapid glance must be taken at the prominent features of the law itself. Many of its precepts were simply intended to make Israel a peculiar people and prevent their too close mingling with men of other religions. Were these more likely to have been given at the outset, when there was no insuperable difficulty in their observance, or is it more probable that they grew up after Israel had been for centuries inextricably involved in the political struggles of her more powerful neighbours? A very large part of the detailed precepts of the law may be classed as educational—rules designed to train for a time spiritual children until they should be able to receive the principles on which they rested. If we compare the principles of morality and virtue as they are set forth in Christianity and in the various heathen religions, it is evident that the training provided by the precepts of the Mosaic Law was a preparation for the former and not for the latter. This relation of Judaism to Christianity is amply recognised by all the teachers of the latter, and it is historically abundantly evident that the gospel arose out of Judaism, as it could not have arisen out of any form of heathenism. Can it be supposed that a system of legislation should have been gradually evolved, providing petty precepts for a narrow-minded nation and seeking to isolate them from all other people, and yet, as shown by the result, designed to prepare them for the broad principles of a world-wide religion in the future? We may now turn to St. Paul's answer to the question, "Wherefore then the law?" He had been maintaining that "the gospel was preached before unto Abraham," to which this question came as an objection. He gives a twofold reply: (1) "It was added because of transgressions," and—(2) "It was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." The force of the first reason is plain, and the whole history of Israel is an illustration of it. The nation who could worship a golden calf in the shadow of Sinai, and commit them-

selves to the abominations of the Canaanites, and could again and again apostatise, surely needed some stringent law "because of transgressions," lest the knowledge of God should altogether perish from the world. The other answer, that "it was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ," is involved in the whole preparatory office of the Hebrew religion, and is historically true. It did lead to Christ all that portion of the people who "looked for redemption," "many myriads of the people," and "a great company of the priests." A glance must now be given to the completing elation of Christianity to Judaism. Throughout the New Testament, in every form of utterance, teaching, narrative, exhortation, argument, it is constantly reiterated by our Lord Himself and by all those whom He commissioned, that the gospel was the intended fulfillment and culmination of the law. It were hard to conceive of a greater contrast to the outward eye and to the superficial thought than was presented between the Judaism and the Christianity of apostolic days. So the unbelieving Jews regarded it, and persecuted to the death those who, they considered, had apostatised from the ancestral faith. Nevertheless, all the earlier promulgators of Christianity with one view steadfastly affirmed that the religion was essentially the same, and that the gospel was but the designed culmination of the law and the realisation of the "new covenant" which the God of Israel had promised to make with His people. They started in their preaching from the synagogue, and the Old Testament was everywhere the foundation of their reasoning. Now if all this was an entire error in the men who made the mistake and in the circumstances under which it was made, it was one of the most wonderful illusions of history, and an illusion shared by substantially all believers in Christianity to the present day. It is a phenomenon without parallel and requires explanation. But if they were right, then the law and the gospel must have proceeded from the same source, and that source could have been none other than Divine. (*Prof. Gardiner.*)

THE BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATOR.

LEVITICUS.

CHAPTER I.

VER. 1. The Lord called unto Moses, and spake.—*The origin and authority of Leviticus*:—These words evidently contain by necessary implication two affirmations: first, that the legislation which immediately follows is of Mosaic origin—"The Lord spake unto Moses"; and secondly, that it was not the product merely of the mind of Moses, but came to him, in the first instance, as a revelation from Jehovah—"Jehovah spake unto Moses." And although it is quite true that the words in this first verse strictly refer only to that section of the book which immediately follows, yet, inasmuch as the same or a like formula is used repeatedly before successive sections—in all, no less than fifty-six times in the twenty-seven chapters—these words may with perfect fairness be regarded as expressing a claim respecting these two points, which covers the entire book. The words say nothing, indeed, as to whether or not Moses wrote every word of this book himself; or whether the Spirit of God directed and inspired other persons, in Moses' time or afterwards, to commit this Mosaic Law to writing. They give us no hint as to when the various sections which make up the book were combined into their present literary form, whether by Moses himself, as is the traditional view, or by men of God in a later day. They simply and only declare the legislation to be of Mosaic origin and of inspired authority. Only, be it observed, so much as this they do affirm in the most direct and uncompromising manner. (S. H. Kellogg, D.D.)

God speaking.—Leviticus is replete with "the gospel of the grace of God." While it paints the blackness of sin, and the depths to which man has fallen, it paints likewise, in glowing colours, the amazing love of God, in the full, rich, and complete provision He has made to meet man's every need in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I. "THE LORD . . . SPAKE." So they are God's words, not man's, to which we are called to listen in this deeply instructive book. Then let us give it attentive hearing (Matt. xi. 15). Moses here records the very words of God, and the Holy Spirit alone can bring to our apprehension His own teaching (John xiv. 26, xvi. 13).

II. THE LORD SPAKE UNTO MOSES. God had before spoken unto him, specially on two memorable occasions. 1. From the burning bush (Exod. iii.), when He came down in grace to deliver His people Israel from bondage in Egypt—as now He delivers from the bondage of sin and Satan—revealing Himself as Jehovah, the self-existent "I AM," able to destroy their enemies, and rescue them (Exod. vi.). 2. From Mount Sinai, after the deliverance from Egypt, when the people had rashly undertaken (apparently in their own strength) to do all that the Lord had spoken (Exod. xix. 8), God spake the words of His "Holy Law," the "fiery law" (Heb. xii. 18-21; Exod. xix. 18-20; Rom. vii. 12; Deut. xxxiii. 2). That law showed the exceeding sinfulness of sin, but provided no way of salvation for those who disobeyed it, therefore could only condemn (Rom. vii. 13, 10, 11), as "all have sinned" (Rom. iii. 23), and "sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John iii. 4), or "lawlessness" (R.V.); but in the passage before us—

III. THE LORD SPAKE "OUT OF THE TABERNACLE OF THE CONGREGATION"; and this tells, not only of deliverance from bondage, but of the Lord's dwelling in the midst of His people, as their Leader and Guide (Exod. xiii. 21; xl. 38), meeting and communing with His servant Moses from the mercy-seat (Exod. xxv. 22, xxx. 6; Numb. vii. 89), and establishing

a medium for worship and access. IV. "GOD HATH SPOKEN UNTO US BY HIS SON," who is the Revealer of the Father (John i. 18). But even now, as *we* listen to the words of God out of the Tabernacle, it is God speaking to *us* by His Son; for the Tabernacle is a type of Jesus. "The glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle" (Exod. xl. 34); Jesus is the "Brightness," or outshining of God's glory (Heb. i. 3). He is the true Tabernacle, "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9). "God was *in* Christ reconciling," &c. (2 Cor. v. 19). Christ is the manifestation of the Father's love (1 John iv. 9, 10). He brings untold glory to God in the salvation of sinners (John xvii. 4); and the saved ones He will take to share His glory hereafter (Luke ix. 30, 31), as the blessed result of "His decease."

V. THE LORD WOULD SPEAK BY THE CHURCH, also typified by the Tabernacle. It was "sprinkled . . . with blood" (Heb. ix. 21); "the Church of God" was "purchased with His own blood" (Acts xx. 28). The Tabernacle was anointed with holy oil (Exod. xxx. 25, 26, xl. 9); the Church has "an unction from the Holy One" (1 John ii. 20). The Lord dwelt in the Tabernacle (2 Sam. vii. 6); the Church is "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. ii. 21, 22). The Spirit reveals "the deep things of God," the things of Christ (1 Cor. ii. 10-12; John xvi. 14, 15); the Church is "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. i. 23); hence it is God's purpose that "unto the . . . might be made known through the Church the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. iii. 10, R.V.). VI. GOD WOULD SPEAK THROUGH EACH MEMBER of the Church. First He speaks *to*, and then *by* them. He spake to Moses, that he might "speak unto the children of Israel." In like manner He acts now: Have we received blessing to our soul? If so, God would have us help others (Mark v. 19). (*Lady Beaujolois Dent.*)

The Tabernacle of the congregation.—*The way of access to God.*—I. IN OUR APPROACH TO GOD NOTHING IS LEFT TO HUMAN INVENTION. 1. There are conditions to our acceptable approach. 2. There are minutely revealed conditions for our approach.

II. FOR OUR RIGHTFUL APPROACH TO HIM, GOD HAS MADE FULL AND GRACIOUS PROVISION. 1. A place for meeting God. 2. A sacrificial basis of acceptance. 3. A mediatorial ministry. III. BY SUCH ARRANGEMENTS FOR OUR ACCEPTABLE APPROACH, GOD HAS LAID US UNDER MOST SOLEMN OBLIGATIONS TO SEEK HIM. 1. Shall God wait in vain within the Holy Place, and none draw near? 2. Can sinful man despise the sacrifice of Jesus offered for his propitiation? 3. With such a Priest within the Holy Place, have we no mediation to ask, no sins to confess, no offerings to bring? (*W. H. Jellie.*)

The essential significance of the Tabernacle.—The essential significance of the Tabernacle may be inferred from the names customarily given to it. These names may be divided into three classes: 1. Those which, like "house," "tent," "dwelling," "dwelling of the testimony," convey the general idea of a place of Divine residence (Exod. xxiii. 19, xxv. 9, xxvi. 36, xxxviii. 21). 2. Those which, like "tent of meeting," or "tent-house of meeting," express the idea of a meeting-place for God and man (Exod. xxvii. 21, xxxix. 32). 3. Those which, like "sanctuary," draw attention to holiness as an attribute of the place itself (Exod. xxv. 8). Now a house where God was, or was supposed to be, must be a place for worship, and a place for Divine worship must of necessity be holy ground; thus one fundamental idea lay at the root of all these appellations, viz., that the Tabernacle was a meeting-place between Jehovah and His covenant people. There Jehovah was to be thought peculiarly present, and therefore peculiarly approachable. By the Jew the Lord God Almighty was not to be sought in woods or fountains or valleys, but in this house which He had appointed. . . . It must be remembered, however, that approach to Jehovah was conditioned by the terms of the Sinaitic revelation. Whilst, therefore, the Tabernacle as the dwelling-place of the Most High, was by the Divine condescension a place where God and the Jew might come together, that contact was arranged in accordance with the characteristics of the Mosaic dispensation. The whole structure was a place of meeting where man and God could congregate; but it was in the court only that the common Israelite could approach Jehovah, and that by mediation in the person of the appointed priestly representatives; in the Holy Place, to which the priests alone had access, the worshippers also approached the throne of Deity by mediation, being admitted, so to speak, to the anteroom of the Divine audience-chamber by the adoration of their chief; whilst to the high priest alone, and that after solemn preparation, was it permitted on one day in the year to pass within the veil, and gaze unhindered upon that mercy-seat, aglow with gold, where rested the shadowy cloud of the Shechinah. Further, if the Tabernacle was the appointed sanctuary where man might meet with God on the fulfilment of certain conditions, be it noted that the

several altars were, so to speak, the points at which those conditions could be best fulfilled. Every square inch of the sacred enclosure was a place of meeting between Jehovah and His people, according to the terms of the Divine revelation : but it was at the altar of burnt-offering in the court that the non-priestly worshippers approached most nearly to their God ; it was at the golden altar in the Holy Place that the priests were admitted to closest access ; and it was as he approached most directly the space beneath the outstretched wings of the cherubim that the high priest drew nearest to the throne of intercession. The several altars were the shrines, so to speak, of the several sanctuaries, in which their essence was concentrated, and from which their power radiated. The essential significance of the peculiar sanctuary of Judaism lay, then, in the fact that, being the visible dwelling-place of Jehovah, it testified to the possibility of human approach to God so long as the conditions of the related laws were observed—these conditions being, so far at least as the theocratic status of the worshippers was concerned, that the Israelite might come near to God in the person of His priests in the court, and especially at the altar of burnt-offering ; that in the Holy Place, and especially at the altar of incense, the priesthood might do homage to Jehovah as enshrined behind the veil ; and that in the Holy of Holies, and especially at the high altar of the mercy-seat, the high priest might, by careful obedience to the prescribed conditions, occasionally regard that cloud by which the Almighty condescended to reveal and at the same time to conceal His presence. (*A. Cave, D.D.*) *God known in the Tabernacle ; or, redemptive relations :—*The redeemed people of God only know God in the Tabernacle ; and none, who belong not to that Tabernacle on earth, can belong to God in heaven. All who are “of faith”—all who have fed on the Passover Lamb, belong to the Tabernacle ; but Egypt is the type of the position of all besides. How important to remember this, when so many efforts are being made to destroy the distinctions which redemption has constituted, and to speak of man’s natural condition as having in it the elements of saving relation to God ! Men wish to sweep, as it were, from the earth the Tabernacle and its lessons, and to sanctify Egypt in the name of God. Israel themselves knew nothing of the Tabernacle whilst in Egypt : it was a gift reserved for them after they had entered the wilderness. They were led into the wilderness not merely to learn its solitude and its sorrows, but to become acquainted with God—His service and His ways. The holy vessels of the Tabernacle, the inner curtains of blue, and purple, and scarlet, the priest robed in garments of glory and beauty, stood in strange contrast with the waste and howling scene around them ; yet faith has still to know the same contrast, whilst learning here respecting Christ and the various relations in which we stand to God and to Him. The heart that lingers in Egypt, and refuses, as it were, to enter the wilderness, will little learn the lessons of the Tabernacle ; but all who recognise how truly redemption has separated them for ever from that land of nature and of curse, will find, in the knowledge of the Tabernacle, their daily solace, till the hour comes for them to enter into the abiding rest. In the Tabernacle we typically learn the relations of God to His redeemed people. We are there taught respecting the sacrifice provided for us in Christ—its fulness, its various relations to God and to ourselves. There we learn the ground on which we worship and serve Him, meeting Him in the blessings of peace through redemption. (*B. W. Newton.*) *God found in His sanctuary :—*But when the Lord had arranged a tent of meeting with His people, He spoke to Moses out of the tent of meeting. It is all very well for the man who is in the wilderness or on the mountain-top, in the line of duty, to listen for the sound of the Lord’s voice there ; but when a man can find his way into the sanctuary there is where he may expect to be spoken to by the Lord. If he leaves the sanctuary to wander among the thorn-bushes, or to clamber the mountain peaks, with the idea that it is in Nature’s temples that he is to find the God of nature, he will miss a meeting with the covenant-making and covenant-keeping God in the place of meeting. There is no more likely place to find God than where God says He may be found ; no more hopeful place for meeting God than in God’s meeting-place. “Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary !” Help us to find Thee there ! (*H. C. Trumbull.*) *The pardoning presence of Jesus :—*The Tabernacle was a figure of Christ, and was intended to teach us some important lessons respecting Him. We have in the Tabernacle a beautiful illustration of one of the precious names of Jesus our Saviour. Just before He came into our world, the angel Gabriel was sent to Joseph, His reputed father, to tell him about that wonderful Child that was to be born unto Mary his wife. And this is what the angel said : “They shall call His name

Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. i. 23). This name is wonderful. It is full of meaning. But many find it difficult to understand its meaning. And so God ordered the Tabernacle to be built in the wilderness, that in it He might dwell among the people, and thus be a figure, or illustration to them of the way in which Jesus now dwells in the hearts of His people by faith. The Tabernacle was a definition of this name—Emmanuel. As God was present with the Israelites in the wilderness, in the Tabernacle, so Jesus is present with His people in this world. And as we study the different parts of this Tabernacle we are taught much that is interesting and profitable concerning the presence of Jesus with His people. The Tabernacle taught that there was to be pardon connected with His presence. The brazen altar, or the altar of burnt sacrifice, was the part of the Tabernacle that taught this lesson. That was the first thing one would see on entering the court of the Tabernacle. Here the daily sacrifice was offered. Here the blood of the slain animals was shed, that it might be sprinkled both on the priests and on the people. No one was allowed to enter the Tabernacle or to worship God there till he had first been to this brazen altar, and had the blood of the sacrifice sprinkled upon him. And the great blessing represented by the shedding and sprinkling of the blood was the pardon of sin. There was no power in the blood of those animals to put away sin, or to procure pardon. But it pointed to the blood of Christ, through which alone all pardon comes. And this is what the Apostle Paul teaches us, when he says that, "without the shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22), or no pardon. If Jesus had not shed His precious blood there never would have been any pardon for sin. But that blood was shed. And now there is pardon for all who repent and believe in Him. His presence with His people is a pardoning presence. "He has power on earth to forgive sins" (Matt. ix. 6). There is nothing that we need more than pardon. We are born in sin. We sin every day, and we are always needing pardon. And it is a blessed thing to know that we can have this pardon at any time by seeking it in the right way. Jesus is—"ready to forgive" (Psa. lxxvi. 5). His promise is that—"He will abundantly pardon" (Isa. lv. 7). Here is an illustration of the pardoning power of Jesus. It was told by a sailor who witnessed it, who was made a Christian by it, and afterwards became a chaplain. "Our vessel lay at anchor," said he, "off the coast of Africa. The yellow fever had broken out on board, and several of the men had died. It was my duty every morning to go through that part of the vessel used as a hospital, and see if any of the men had died during the night. One morning as I was passing through this sick ward, a poor fellow lying there took hold of me with his cold, clammy hand. I knew him very well. He was an old shipmate, and one of the wickedest men on board. I saw in a moment that he had not long to live. 'Oh, Jim,' he said, 'for God's sake, let some one come and read the Bible to me before I die!' None of the sailors had a Bible; but at last I found that there was one on board belonging to the cabin-boy. I told him to get his Bible, and bring it into the sick ward, and went back there myself. Presently the boy came with a small Bible in his hand. In the meantime a number of the Kroomen, or native Africans, who were working on board, gathered round the sick man, not to see him die, but, as one of them said, 'to see what de good book do for poor Massa Richie.' I told the boy to read a chapter. He sat down by the sick man, and, opening at the third chapter of St. John, he began to read. The poor fellow fixed his eyes on the reader, and listened most earnestly to every word he spoke. Presently the boy came to the beautiful words in the sixteenth verse, 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life!' I watched the face of the dying man as these words were read. I never saw such earnestness and anxiety in any face as were in his. The boy was going on with the next verse, when the sick man exclaimed, 'Stop my boy, stop! Read that verse again, and read it slowly.' The boy repeated the verse, and was going on again. But he was interrupted a second and a third time with the earnest cry, 'Stop, my boy, stop! Read that verse again.' And when he had done so a number of times, the dying man said, 'Don't read any more. That's enough.' And then, as he grew fainter and fainter, we heard him, in a low voice, repeating to himself those wonderful words, and making his own remarks on them, '*Whosoever*—that means anybody. That means me. *Whosoever believeth*. I do believe this. Well, what then? *Whosoever believeth shall not perish*. No, not perish, but have everlasting life. Not perish—not perish—but have everlasting life.' These were his last words. With these upon his lips, he passed away, and entered into heaven—'one pardoned sinner more,' saved through

the precious blood of Christ." The presence of Jesus which the Tabernacle illustrates is—a pardoning presence. (*Richard Newton, D.D.*)

Ver. 2. Bring an offering unto the Lord.—*The Levitical sacrifices*:—I. THE SACRIFICES ARISING FROM BREACH OF THE COVENANT—COMPULSORY. Sin and trespass-offerings (chaps. iv.—vi.). Presumptuous—literally high-handed—sins incurred that forfeiture (Numb. xv. 30; Deut. xvii. 12). In contrast to these sins of presumption—1. The sin-offering was for sins of ignorance (chaps. iv., v.). 2. The trespass-offering (chap. v. 14, &c.) differed from the sin-offering mainly in the character of the sin to be atoned for. It was a sin calling for “amends” or compensation. II. THE SACRIFICES FROM WITHIN THE COVENANT—VOLUNTARY. Omitting the meat-offering (chap. ii.), which was an adjunct of the other sacrifices, and involved no shedding of blood, we notice—1. The burnt-offering. The stated and congregational burnt-offerings of the day, and week, and year, &c., were compulsory. The occasional offering, of which we speak here, was voluntary (chap. i.). The burnt-offering pointed to the entire surrender of a man’s being and life to God. Its characteristic was its entire consumption and up-going in a flame to God. It was equivalent to a prayer, recognising God’s sovereignty, and His claim of service in all our relations. He who asks, “How can I best serve God?” will commit his way to God, and be at peace. 2. The offering vowed: *i.e.*, made as the result of a preceding vow (Gen. xxv. 1; 1 Sam. i. 11, 28). 3. The thank-offering, the greatest of the three. The occasions for the thank-offering were innumerable. Joy as well as sorrow calls to religious exercise. “In everything give thanks.” This sacrifice of praise is the one sacrifice of heaven. (*W. Roberts, M.A.*) *The giving of the sacrificial laws*:—I. The very same voice which proclaimed the commandments on Sinai is HERE SAID TO ANNOUNCE THE NATURE OF THE SACRIFICES, AND HOW, WHEN, AND BY WHOM THEY ARE TO BE PRESENTED. The unseen King and Lawgiver is here, as everywhere, making known His will. Those sacrifices which it was supposed were to bend and determine His will themselves proceeded from it. II. These words were spoken to the children of Israel OUT OF THE TABERNACLE. The Tabernacle was the witness of God’s abiding presence with His people, the pledge that they were to trust Him, and that He sought intercourse with them. III. The Tabernacle is represented as the Tabernacle of the CONGREGATION. There, where God dwells, is the proper home of the whole people; there they may know that they are one. IV. “Say to the children of Israel, If any of you bring an offering to the Lord.” THE DESIRE FOR SUCH SACRIFICE IS PRESUMED. Everything in the position of the Jew is awakening in him the sense of gratitude, of obligation, of dependence. He is to take of the herd and the flock for his offering. The lesson is a double one. The common things, the most ordinary part of his possessions, are those which he is to bring; that is one part of his teaching. The animals are the subjects of man; he is to rule them and make use of them for his own higher objects; that is another. V. THE VICTIM WAS TAKEN TO THE DOOR OF THE PLACE AT WHICH ALL ISRAELITES HAD AN EQUAL RIGHT TO APPEAR; BUT THE MAN WHO BROUGHT IT LAID HIS OWN HAND UPON THE HEAD OF IT. He signified that the act was his, that it expressed thoughts in his mind which no one else could know of. VI. THE RECONCILIATION WHICH HE SEEKS HE SHALL FIND. God will meet him there. God accepts this sign of his submission. He restores him to his rights in the Divine society. VII. NOW IT IS THAT WE FIRST HEAR OF THE PRIESTS, AARON’S SONS. If there was to be a congregation, if the individual Israelites were not to have their separate sacrifices and their separate gods, then there must be a representative of this unity. The priest was consecrated as a witness to the people of the actual relation which existed between them and God. (*F. D. Maurice, M.A.*) *Communion with God by a redeemed people through altar-offerings*:—I. ALTAR-OFFERINGS AND TABERNACLE MINISTRIES ALL REACH THEIR COMPLETION IN CHRIST. 1. In each offering three distinct objects are present: the offering, the priest, the offerer. Christ is each of and all these: Substitute, Mediator, Innocent Victim. 2. The difference in the several offerings. Different aspects of Christ’s offering. 3. The offerer himself also reflects Christ in His diverse aspects. 4. The different grades in the various offerings: bullock, lamb, dove. Denoting the different estimates and apprehensions formed of Christ by His people. Some never go beyond the conception of Christ as their Paschal offering, securing their redemption from Egyptian bondage and death. Others, however, see Him as their Burnt-offering, wholly devoted to God for them; while to others He is the passive Lamb, silent and submissive in affliction; and to others the mourning Dove, gentle and sorrowful in His innocence. II. ALTAR-OFFERINGS AND TABERNACLE MINISTRIES WERE

DESIGNED FOR ISRAEL'S ACCEPTABLE COMMUNION WITH GOD. The types of Leviticus, in distinction from the types of redemption or deliverance from doom, give us the work of Christ in its bearing on worship and communion. 1. They meet the needs of a ransomed people in providing for their access to God. If they come for consecration they bring the burnt-offerings; if for grateful acknowledgment of Divine bounty and graciousness, they bring the food offerings; if for reconciliation, after ignorant misadventure or neglect of duty or temporary transgression, they bring their peace or trespass-offering. But they all provide a basis for access to and acceptance with God. 2. Christ's work, as connected with the communion of His people, must be viewed under manifold representations. (*A. Jukes.*) *Of the differences between the giving of the moral law, and these ceremonial laws:—*1. The moral law contained in the Decalogue was delivered immediately by God Himself, because it concerned all people; the ceremonial law by Moses, because it specially concerned the Jews. 2. They differed in the manner; for the Decalogue was written in tables of stone, but these only in a book; to show that they were perpetual, these not to endure always. 3. The place was different. The moral law was delivered in Mount Sinai; the ceremonial out of the Tabernacle, to show that it served only for the Tabernacle, and was to continue no longer. 4. They differ in the time of delivery. The moral law was delivered at once; the ceremonies were given at divers times, for Moses had not been able at once to have received them all. 5. There was some difference in respect of the people, in whose hearing these laws were delivered. The Decalogue was delivered in Mount Sinai by a loud, thundering voice, that all might hear; but here at the giving of the ceremonial law only the heads, princes, and elders came together, particularly the Levites whom the observations of these ceremonies more nearly concerned. (*A. Willet, D.D.*) *Essential significance of the Mosaic injunctions:—*1. At the root of the essential significance of the Mosaic sacrifices two ideas lie—viz., the Mosaic idea of presentation, and that of atonement. (1) Upon the idea of presentation (or "giving to God," as it has been otherwise termed), the fundamental idea of all sacrifice, little need here be said. The Mosaic system of worship, like the patriarchal, was based upon the fact that man might approach God so long as his hands were not empty. As Adam worshipped in Eden by the surrender of time and strength in obedient performance of the Divine will, and possibly by the presentation of some of the fruits of his labour, as Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock, the acceptance of his gift opening a way to God which the patriarchs were not slow to follow; so, in the law given upon Sinai, the Jew was bidden to come near his Maker and Preserver, gifts in hand. Offerings of toil became means of grace; things eloquent of cost were channels for what was priceless; pledges of human sincerity in appeal were transmuted into pledges of Divine earnestness in reply; gifts from men to God brought gifts from God to men. (2) Unlike the preceding idea, which belonged to every sacrifice of whatever name, in some measure or other, the idea of atonement belonged simply to sacrifices of blood. "To make an atonement," if we probe the Hebrew figure to the bottom, was to throw, so to speak, a veil over sin so dazzling that the veil and not the sin was visible, or to place side by side with sin something so attractive as to completely engross the eye. The figure which the New Testament uses when it speaks of the "new robe," the Old Testament uses when it speaks of "atonement." When an atonement was made under the Law, it was as though the Divine eye, which had been kindled at the sight of sin and foulness, was quieted by the garment thrown around it; or, to use a figure much too modern, yet equally appropriate, it was as if the sinner who had been exposed to the lightning of the Divine wrath had been suddenly wrapped round and insulated. The idea of atonement was the so covering the sinner that his sin was invisible or non-existent in the sense that it could no longer come between him and his Maker. 2. Carrying in mind these two conceptions of presentation and atonement which the language of the law associates with every animal sacrifice, the names and express statements concerning each variety of such sacrifice will enable us to add their distinguishing to their general characteristics. (1) The burnt-offering was at once a sacrifice and an atonement; but it was the element of presentation which was brought by it into especial prominence. It was pre-eminently the sacrifice of worship. (2) The peace-offering resembled the burnt-offering in the relative insignificance which it attached to the fact of atonement; it differed in laying stress upon quite another affinity which might exist between God and man. As the burnt-offering provided a means of individual worship, the peace-offering provided a worship that was social. The peace-offerings were the sacrifices of

friendship, and were presented by those who either desired, or lived and rejoiced in, the sense of an established friendship between themselves and their Maker and Preserver. (3) In the sin and trespass-offerings the fact of atonement is emphasised. (c) The sin-offerings, as their name implies, were offerings for sin. They may be divided into three classes: those which were presented in processes of purification; those which had to do with the expiation of precise sins, whether committed in church or state, by priest or ruler or common Israelite; and those which had to do with the expiation of undefined sins. (b) The trespass-offerings were presented in atonement for sins against God or against man which admitted of compensation. There was in every trespass-offering the idea of retribution. (4) Of the several species of bloodless sacrifices, nothing further need be said as regards their essential significance than that they are gifts pure and simple, without any element of atonement, and that they have for their aim to carry this fundamental conception of worship by presentation into all the ramifying relations of life. By the aid of the meat-offerings and drink-offerings and their priestly analogues, the shew-bread and oil and incense, God might be approached by the produce of labour; by the ransoms and firstfruits, He might be approached in recognition of the gifts of child and beast and produce of the earth; even battle might be consecrated by the presentation of spoils. By gifts God could be approached, and the sources of these gifts being various, the Divine hallowing might be as various. 3. Without minutely investigating the essential significance of the various holy days of the Jewish calendar, it is sufficient to call to mind that, amongst other uses, these holy days were days for "holy convocation." They were opportunities specially arranged for a more regular and continuous attendance upon the means of grace provided by the Tabernacle and its services. (*A. Cave, D.D.*) *The Jewish calendar of sacrifice*:—How laborious, protracted, and intricate a system was this Mosaic worship by presentation! Yet how imposing! No religious ritual of ancient or modern times has appealed more forcibly to the eye or the imagination. It was a stirring and suggestive sight, beyond all question, which greeted such an one as a Levite, as he stood in early morning within the court of the Tabernacle ready to perform those more menial offices to which he had been appointed. Around him ran the white curtains of the sacred enclosure, relieved at regular intervals by the dull gold of the copper uprights and the gleam of the silver capitals. A few paces from where he watches, the more favoured members of his tribe, bearded, clad in their priestly robes of white and their parti-coloured girdles, are standing barefoot near the altar of burnt-offering, on the hearth of which the remnants of last night's sacrifice are still burning, or possibly purifying themselves at the laver in preparation for their sacred duties. The lamb for the morning sacrifice is slain and burnt before his eyes; and a few moments afterwards, the high priest, in his official robes of white and blue, "Holiness to the Lord" glistening in gold upon his fair mitre, the jewelled breast-plate flashing in the sun, is passing to the Holy Place, the golden bells and pomegranates at the fringe of his tunic ringing as he goes. Perhaps, as holy hands draw aside the curtain of the sanctuary, a glimpse is caught of the consecrated space within, lit by the golden candlestick and hazy with incense from the golden altar; or, if the interior is sealed, there nevertheless is the tent of Jehovah, its gorgeous parti-coloured curtain in full view, and its immediate covering of blue and gold and scarlet and purple worked upon white, with cherubim, just visible beneath the outer awnings; and the onlooker knew that within, not far from the ark and the mercy-seat and the Shechinah, which were hidden behind the veil, the high priest was performing Divine service, and meeting with Jehovah under exceptional privileges. As private members of the chosen race come streaming in with their offerings, the more active duties of the day begin. At one time, one who has inadvertently broken some commandment of the law is watching the blood of the sin-offering, which he has just brought and killed with his own hand, as it is smeared in atonement upon the horns of the altar; at another, the priest is listening over the head of a ram to a confession of fraud, and computing the amount of monetary indemnity to be paid. Now a Hebrew woman, but recently a mother, is modestly presenting herself with her offering of pigeons; and now the high priest is passing through the gate of the court, attended by a Levite carrying birds and scarlet wool and hyssop—he has been summoned without the camp to examine a restored leper. Anon an application is made for the means of purifying some tent where the dead is lying. Here, in joyful recognition of the Divine favour, a solitary worshipper is presenting a burnt-offering; there, recumbent upon the holy soil, a whole family are merrily partaking of the remains of a peace-offering. At one hour a householder is com-

pounding for the property which he has voluntarily vowed unto the Lord ; the next, a Nazarite, with unshorn hair and beard, is presenting the prescribed sacrifices for release from his vow. Possibly, as the day advances, a consecration to the priesthood is impressively performed. And these and other ceremonies are maintained the whole year round. As the Jewish calendar ran its course in those times, exceptional, alas ! when the religious sense of the nation was quick and its practice scrupulous, it was as if one long bleat, one incessant loving, filled the air ; it was as if one long, continuous stream of sacrificial blood choked the runnels of the court. The year opened with the evening sacrifice and the new moon celebration, the expiring flames of which were fed next day by the ordinary morning sacrifice and by a round of individual presentations, which must sometimes have known no interruption until the smoke of the evening sacrifice again rose into the air and another day began. Day after day the customary ceremonial was repeated, till the Sabbath twilight fell and double sacrifices were slaughtered. On the fourteenth day of the first month came the solemn celebration of the Passover, when in every home, with devout recollections and enthusiastic hopes, a Paschal lamb was spread upon the board. Then followed the seven days of Unleavened Bread, with their customary and holy-day ritual, bringing at length, after the repeated diurnal, sabbatic, and mensual formalities, the fuller slaughter of Pentecost. Day after day, Sabbath after Sabbath, new moon after new moon, the authorised worship was again continued, until there came a break to the monotony once more on the first day of the seventh month in the Feast of Trumpets, and on the tenth day of the same month in the awful and grave procedure of the Day of Atonement, followed after five days' interval by the singular and more grateful worship of the Feast of Tabernacles. The year was afterwards brought to a close by the common series of daily, weekly, and monthly effusions of blood. (*Ibid.*)

*Divers sacrifices, but one Christ :—*1. There were many sorts of sacrifices and yet but one Christ to be signified by them all. This did the Lord in great mercy and wisdom, that so His people, fully busied and pleased with such variety, might have neither cause nor leisure to look unto the wicked idolatries of the heathens, according to the several charges given them of God, "To beware lest they were taken in a snare, to ask after their gods saying, How did these nations serve their gods, that I may do so likewise?" &c. Seeing all the abomination that God hateth, they did unto their gods, burning both their sons and daughters with fire to their gods, and the Lord would have them do only what He commanded, putting nothing unto it, neither taking anything from it. 2. Although Christ be but one, and His sacrifice but one, yet great is the fruit, and many mercies flow from Him and His death unto us. By Him our sins are washed out, by Him God's wrath against us is appeased, by Him we are adopted and taken for the sons of God and fellow-heirs with Him, by Him we are justified and endued with the Holy Ghost, enabled thereby to die unto sin and to live unto righteousness, walking in His holy commandments with comfort, and longing for our deliverance out of this vale of misery, "That we may be clothed with our house, which is from heaven," &c. Divers sorts of sacrifices, therefore, were appointed, to note, by that variety, the variety of these fruits of Christ to all believers, though He be but one. 3. There were many sorts of sacrifices, that so plainly the Church might see that these kind of sacrifices were not the true sacrifices for sins. For if any one had been able to take away sin the others had been in vain added (see Heb. x. 1). (*Bp. Babington.*)

*The need of varied sacrifices :—*The commencing chapters of Leviticus present to us five different aspects of the sacrificial service of Christ, varied according to the variety of those needs in us which the grace of the One Sacrifice is designed to meet. The want of that full and unreserved devotedness which is due on our part to God, and claimed by Him, but which is by us never rendered, is met by that abounding grace which has appointed another, perfect in devotedness and self-renunciation, to be a burnt-offering in our room. The manifold deficiencies in our personal characters—the presence in them of so much that should be absent, and the absence of so much that should be present, is met by the presentation of Him for us, the perfectness of whose character is here typified by the excellency of the meat-offering. The condition of our nature which is enmity against God, because sin, essential sin, dwells in it, is met by the efficacy of the peace sacrifice, whereby, notwithstanding the enmity of our nature, peace with the Holy One becomes our portion. Sin, even when committed in such intensity of blindness, as that we understand not the heinousness of that which we are doing, and perhaps mistake it for good—such sin is met by the sin-offering ; or if it be committed knowingly, not under the blindness of ignorance, but in the wil-

fulness of a heart that consciously refuses to be restrained, it is met by the grace of the trespass-offering. Such are the aspects under which the perfectness of the One Sacrifice is presented to us in the commencing chapters of Leviticus. The aspects are various, but the sacrifice is one; just as the colours of the rainbow may, for instruction sake, be presented to us separately, but the rainbow which they unitedly constitute is one. After we have learned in distinctness, we combine in unity. Nor is there any division of the perfectness of the One Sacrifice in its application to them that believe. From the first moment we believe, the perfectness of Christ's sacrifice is in all its totality ours. We may not, perhaps, either appreciate or understand all that is typified by these various offerings, yet the united value of them all is reckoned to us by God. (*B. W. Newton.*)

Origin of sacrifices :—It is a little surprising, upon first view, that God should appoint or sanction rites and services of worship, the observance of which would make His sanctuary look so much like a solemn slaughter-house. But where sin is stayed and quenched, there must be blood. Blood is the substance of life; and as sin involves the forfeiture of life, "without shedding of blood there is no remission." Hence "almost all things are by the law purged with blood." These bloody rites, however, did not originate with "the law." It is a question with learned men how they did originate. Some refer them to some primitive enactment of God, and others regard them as the natural outgrowth of man's consciousness of sin, and his desire to appease the Divine anger felt to attend upon it. It is certain that they are nearly as old as man. They date back to Noah, to Abel, to Adam himself. They have been found among nearly all nations. And when God gave commandment to Moses concerning them, they already formed a part of the common religion of the world. They are not here spoken of as a new institution, now for the first time introduced, but are referred to rather as an ancient and well-known element of man's worship, to which the Divine Legislator meant only to affix a more specific ritual. That offerings would, and ought to be made, seems to be taken for granted, whilst these new commands relate only to the manner in which they were to be made. "If," that is, in the ordinary course of things already familiar, or, "when any man of you shall bring an offering to the Lord, ye shall bring" so and so. There is a worship, at least a disposition to worship, which has descended upon all serious men from the very beginning. There is a theology even in Nature, and a faculty of worship or religiousness which is somehow natural unto man. Revelation does not deny this, but takes it for granted, and often appeals to it, and proceeds upon it as its original groundwork. It does not propose to engraft a religious department on man's constitution, but recognises such a department as already in existence, and proposes merely to assist, and guide, and guard it against falsehood, idolatry, and superstition. "Nature, left to herself, and unassisted by Divine teachings, certainly wanders into mazes of perplexity, involves herself in error and blindness, and becomes the victim of folly, full of all sorts of superstition." So said the knowing leader of the glorious Reformation; and all the records of time attest the truth of his statement. Man needs to hear a voice from heaven—a supernatural word—to guide him successfully to the true God, and to the right worship of that God. Nature may dispose him to make offerings, and a common religious consciousness may approve and sanction them; but it yet remains for God to say what sort of offerings are proper, and how they are to be acceptably presented. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*)

Redemption by blood offensive to some minds :—Redemption by blood is the great theme of the Scriptures, from beginning to end. It ever and again comes up. God will not permit it to remain out of sight for a single chapter. No matter what the figure is, it is made somehow to embrace this. It is repeated at every turn. It stands out boldly at every step. Every imaginable method is taken to write it deep in the soul, to engrave it upon the conscience, to fill the whole mind with it, and to make it the grand centre of all religious thought and belief. It seems greatly to disgust and offend many that we have so much to say about *blood*. Some verily seem to think, and some sceptics have argued, that the Bible cannot be what it claims to be, because it represents God as appointing and taking pleasure in such sanguinary arrangements and services. But observe the glaring inconsistency of such people in shrinking with abhorrence from the bloody nature of the system which God has arranged for our salvation, whilst they are yet great admirers of the taste and culture of the men and times we read of in the classics. They are charmed with the ancient Greeks and Romans, and are ever putting them forward as our exemplars and guides; and cannot get done talking about their glorious civilisation; just as if the religion of Greece and Rome had no sanguinary rites, or involved no

dealing in bloody sacrifices. Never was there a religious system on earth more bloody in its observances, or more shocking in its sacrificial ritual, than those in vogue among these very Greeks and Romans, sanctioned and supported by their laws, and advocated by their greatest men. Their altars flowed, not only with the blood of bulls and goats and various unclean and disgusting creatures, but with the blood of human beings, who were annually slain and offered up in religious worship to propitiate their sanguinary deities. In the worship of Zeus Lycæus in Arcadia, human sacrifices were regularly offered for hundreds of years, down to the time of the Roman Emperors. In Leucas, a man was every year put to death at the high festival of Apollo. When their great generals went out to war, they first offered up human victims to gain the assistance of their divinities. Before the battle of Salamis, Themistocles sacrificed three Persians to Dionysius. The city of Athens—the very “eye of Greece”—had an annual festival in honour of the Delian Apollo, at which two persons were every year put to death, the one for the men and the other for the women, of that renowned metropolis. The neck of the one who died for the men was surrounded with a garland of black figs, and the neck of the other with a garland of white figs, and both were beaten with rods of fig-wood as they were led forth to a place where they were burned alive, and their ashes cast into the air and sea. And Grecian story tells of many parents, who laid violent hands upon their children, and offered them up as bloody sacrifices to their gods. Nor was it much different with the Romans. In their earlier history it was the custom, under certain contingencies, to sacrifice to their deities everything born of man or beast between the first day of March and the last day of April. Even in the latest period of the Roman Republic, men were sacrificed to Mars in the Campus Martius, by priests of state, and their heads stuck up at the Regia. I mention these things, not to vindicate the Levitical rites, of which they were monstrous and wicked distortions and perversions, but to show the miserable inconsistency of those sceptical people who denounce the atoning regulations of the Scriptures, and hold up the taste and ideas of the Greeks and Romans as the true models of what is beautiful, refined, and elevated. I merely wish to have you know and feel, that if the Hebrew ritual is to be regarded as offensive to a lofty æsthetic taste, the ritual of the most polished nations of antiquity was still more offensive and abhorrent in the utmost degree; and that if the religion of the Scriptures cannot be received as of God by reason of its connection with scenes of blood, there is no system of religion upon earth, ancient or modern, that can be so received; because all others have been equally and still more sanguinary in their services, and that, too, without any of the deep and affecting moral meaning of this. And I freely confess that I see nothing in the doctrine of salvation by blood, or in the Jewish rites, which typified it with so much strength and clearness, either to offend my taste, to shock my reason, or the least to interfere with the readiest and fullest acceptance of the Scriptures as the true revelation of Almighty God. True, I behold in it much that humbles my pride—that tells me I am a very wicked sinner—that proclaims my native condition far removed from what God’s law requires—that assures me I am undone as regards my own strength—and that holds out death and eternal burning as what I deserve. But all this accords with my conscience, and is re-echoed in the deepest convictions of my soul. And with it all, it presents to me a plan of redemption so out of the line of man’s thoughts, so fitted to my felt wants, and so completely attested by its moral efficacy, that it is itself a mighty demonstration to my mind of its Divine original. The very fact that the Bible has but one great subject running through all its histories and prophecies, ordinances and types, epistles and psalms—that salvation by blood is the focal point in which all its various lines of light converge—is to me one of the strongest evidences that it has come from God. When I consider that its writers lived hundreds and thousands of years apart, that they were found in all walks of life, and that they wrote in languages foreign to each other, I can find no way to account for the unity which pervades it but by admitting that these various writers were all moved and guided by the same high intelligence and inspired of God. (*Ibid.*) *The ancient ritual:*—Here is a singular conjunction of the legal and the voluntary. Jehovah fixes the particulars, but the man himself decides on the act of sacrificial worship. Observe how the Lord works from the opposite point from which the first of the Ten Commandments was given. There God called for the worship: here He leaves the man to offer the worship and proceeds to tell him how. The preparation of the heart and the answer of the tongue are from God. No man was at liberty in the ancient Church to determine his own terms of approach to God. The throne must be approached

in the appointed way. We are not living in an era of religious licentiousness. There is a genius of worship, there is a method of coming before God. God does not ask us to conceive or suggest methods of worship. He Himself meets us with His time-bill and His terms of spiritual commerce. God is in heaven and we are upon the earth; therefore should our words be few. The law of approach to the Divine throne is unchanged. The very first condition of worship is obedience. Obedience is better than sacrifice, and is so because it is the end of sacrifice. But see how, under the Levitical ritual, the worshipper was trained to obedience. Mark the exasperating minuteness of the law. Nothing was left to haphazard. The worship was to be offered through mediation. The priestly element pervades the universe; it is the mystery of life and service. The service was voluntary. Notice the expression, "He shall offer it of his own voluntary will." The voluntariness gives the value to the worship. We can only pray with the heart. There is in this great ritual a wonderful mixing of free will and Divine ordination; the voluntary and the unchangeable; the human action and the Divine decree. We cannot understand it; if we are able to understand it then it is no larger than our understanding: so God becomes a measurable God, merely the shadow of human wit, a God that cannot be worshipped. It is where our understanding fails or rises into a new wealth of faith, that we find the only altar at which we can bow, with all our powers, where we can utter with enthusiasm all our hopes and desires. So we come with our sacrifice and offering, whatever it may be, and having laid it on the altar, we can follow it no further—free as the air up to a given point, but after that bounded and fixed and watched and regulated—a mystery that can never be solved, and that can never be chased out of a universe in which the infinite and finite confer. The worship of the ancient Church was no mere expression of sentiment. It was a most practical worship, not a sentimental exercise; it was a confession and an expiation—in a word, an atonement. This fact explains all. Take the word "atonement" out of Christian theology, and Christian theology has no centre, no circumference, no life, no meaning, no virtue. If we could read this Book of Leviticus through at one sitting the result might be expressed in some such words as these—"Thank God we have got rid of this infinite labour; thank God this is not in the Christian service; thank God we are Christians and not Jews." Let not our rejoicing be the expression of selfishness or folly. It is true we have escaped the bondage of the letter, but only to enter into the larger and sweeter bondage of the spirit. The Jew gave his bullock or his goat, his turtledove or his young pigeon; but now each man has to give himself. We now buy ourselves off with gold. Well may the apostle exhort us, saying, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Wonderful is the law which lays its claim upon the ransomed soul—none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; whether we live, we live unto the Lord; whether we die, we die unto the Lord; living or dying we are the Lord's. We have escaped measurable taxation, but we have come under the bond of immeasurable love. We have escaped the letter, we have been brought under the dominion of the spirit. Let us be careful, therefore, how we congratulate ourselves on having escaped the goat-offering and heifer-offering, and turtledove and young pigeon sacrifices; how we have been brought away from the technicality and poverty of the letter into the still further deeper poverty of selfishness. As Christians we have nothing that is our own; not a moment of time is ours; not a pulse that throbs in us, not a hair of our head, not a coin in the coffer belongs to us. This is the severe demand of love. Who can rise to the pitch of that self-sacrifice? (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *God's way out of sin*:—What an important part the word "if" plays in the opening chapters of Leviticus! At first we did not seem to see it, but by frequent repetition it urges itself upon our notice as a term of vital importance in the argument of the subject, whatever that subject may be. We cannot enter into the subject except through the gate *if*. It is God's word. Through the gate *if* we enter into the temple of obedience. Having crossed the threshold, then law begins to operate. After the *if* comes the discipline—the sweet, but often painful necessity. Observe the balance of operation: Man must reply; having replied, either in one form or the other, necessary consequences follow. It is so in all life. There is no exception in what is known as the religious consciousness and activity. The great sea says in its wild waves, "If ye will walk on me and become citizens of this wilderness of water, then you must submit to the law of the country; you must fall into the rhythm of the universe; you must build your wooden houses or your iron

habitations according to laws old as God; you need not come upon my waters; I do not ask you to come; when you come I will obliterate your footprints so that no man may ever know that you have crossed me; but if you come you must obey." We have, therefore, no liberty after a certain time. This is the law of all life. But we never give up our liberty in response to the laws of the universe without our surrender being compensated after God's measure. The law gave great choice of offering. It said, "If you bring a burnt-offering, bring it of the herd if you have one. If you have not a herd of cattle, bring it of the flocks; bring it of the flock of the sheep; but if you are too poor to have a flock of sheep, bring a goat from the flock of the goats; only in all cases this condition must be permanent: whatever you offer must be without blemish. But if you have no cattle, no sheep, no goats, then bring it of the fowls: bring turtledoves or young pigeons; the air is full of them, and the poorest man can take them." Is that not mercy twice blessed? We are not all masters of cattle that browse upon the green hills; nor are we all flock-masters, and amongst flockmasters there are rich and poor. God says, "Let your offering be according to your circumstances, only without blemish, and it shall be accepted." There is no short and easy method with sin. Men have sought by excess of the very thing itself to destroy sin, and if they could have gone forward from indulgence to indulgence, from insanity to insanity, they might have escaped the remorse of this world; but God has so constituted the universe that men have moments of sobriety, times of mental and moral reaction, periods in which they see themselves and their destiny with an appalling vividness, and in those hours it is found that the sin which began the mischief is still there. There is no way out of it but God's way. (*Ibid.*) *What is our offering to the Lord?*—"If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord." And is there any man of you who will not bring an offering unto the Lord? Have you brought an offering to Him? When? What was it? You don't mean to call that trifle that you dropped into the contribution-box—because you must keep up appearances in church, you know; you don't mean to call that your offering unto the Lord! You don't mean to call your amount paid for pew-rent—so that you could have your own independent sittings, and that in the very best place you could get for your money; you don't mean to call that your offering to the Lord! Come, now, what has been your offering unto the Lord—an offering that you could fairly point the Lord to, in comparison with what He has given to you, and could say, "There, Lord, that is my offering to Thee"? "If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord"—well, what is the offering? Let it be fairly recognised. God wants to know what it is. Can you tell Him? (*H. C. Trumbull.*) *Sacrifice the one great idea of the Bible:*—As in Beethoven's matchless music there runs one idea, worked out through all the changes of measure and of key, now almost hidden, now breaking out in rich, natural melody, whispered in the treble, murmured in the bass, dimly suggested in the prelude, but growing clearer and clearer as the work proceeds, winding gradually back until it ends in the keys in which it began, and closes in triumphant harmony: so throughout the whole Bible there runs one great idea: man's ruin by sin, and his redemption by grace; in a word, Jesus Christ the Saviour. This runs through the Old Testament, that prelude to the New; dimly promised at the Fall, and more clearly to Abraham; typified in the ceremonies of the law; all the events of sacred history paving the way for His coming; the great idea growing clearer and clearer as the time drew on. Then the full harmony broke out in the song of the angels, "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace, goodwill towards men." (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The ceremonies of the law pointed to Christ:*—The earth bringeth forth fruit of itself, but first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear (*Mark iv. 28*). So did the blade or herb spring out of the law of nature; the ear or culm, in the law written; but we have in the gospel the pure grain or full corn, which is Christ Jesus. Therefore, as the stalk or ear is of necessary use till the corn be ripe, but the corn being ripe we no longer use the chaff with it, so till Christ was exhibited in the flesh, which lay hidden in the blade and spike of the law, the ceremonies had their use; but since that by His death and passion this pure wheat is thrashed and winnowed, and by His ascension laid up in the garner of heaven, they are of no further use (*Eph. ii. 15*). The Jews were taught by those shadows that the body should come, and we know by the same shadows that the body is come; the arrow moveth, whilst it flies at the mark, but having hit the mark, resteth in it. (*J. Spencer.*) *The completed design:*—Bartholdi's gigantic statue of "Liberty Enlightening the World," occupies a fine position on Bedloe's Island, which commands the approach to New York Harbour. It holds up a torch, which

is to be lit at night by electric light. The statue was cast in portions in Paris. The separate pieces were very different in appearance, and, taken apart, of uncouth shape. It was only when all were brought together, each in its right place, that the complete design was apparent. Then the omission of any one would have left the work imperfect. In this it was an emblem of Holy Scripture. We do not always see the object of different portions, nevertheless each has its place, and the whole is a magnificent statue of Jesus Christ. (*The Freeman.*) *Outlines of Christ*:—I was looking one day at some of the paintings of the late American artist, Mr. Kensett. I saw some pictures that were just faint outlines; in some places you would see only the branches of a tree and no trunk, and in another case the trunk and no branches. He had not finished the work. It would have taken him days, and months, perhaps, to have completed it. Well, my friend, in this world we get only the faintest outlines of what Christ is. (*T. De Witt Talmage.*)

Ver. 3. If his offering be a burnt sacrifice.—*The burnt-offering*:—I. IN ITS CONTRAST TO THE OTHER OFFERINGS. 1. It was “a sweet savour” offering; as such in perfect contrast with the sin-offerings. We are not here, therefore, to consider Christ as the sin-bearer, but as the man in perfectness meeting God in holiness. The thought here is not, “God hath made Him to be sin for us,” but rather, “He loved us, and gave Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour.” Jesus, both in the burnt-offering and sin-offering, stood as our representative. When He obeyed, He obeyed “for us”: when He suffered, He suffered “for us.” But in the burnt-offering He appears for us, not as our sin-bearer, but as man offering to God something which is most precious to Him. We have here what we may in vain search for elsewhere: man giving to God what truly satisfies Him. We too often omit this thought when thinking of the offering of Jesus. We think of His death, but little of His life. We look but little into His ways. Yet it is His ways throughout His pilgrimage, even to the way He laid down His life, which God so delights in. Our views are so selfish and meagre. If we are saved, we seek no further. God, however, puts the burnt-offering first: for this was peculiarly His portion in Jesus. And just in proportion as a believer grows in grace, we shall find him turning intelligently to the Gospels; from them adding to the knowledge he has of the work of Jesus, greater knowledge of His ways and person; with earnest desire to know more of the Lord Himself, and how in all things He was “a sweet savour to Jehovah.” 2. But the burnt-offering was not only “a sweet savour”; it was also an offering “for acceptance”—that is, it was offered to God to secure the acceptance of the offerer. So we read—I give the more correct translation—“he shall offer it for his acceptance.” To understand this, we must recur for a moment to the position Christ occupied as offerer. He stood for man as man under the law, and, as under law, His acceptance depended on His perfectness. God had made man upright; but he had sought out many inventions. One dispensation after another had tried whether, under any circumstances, man could render himself acceptable to God. But age after age passed away: no son of Adam was found who could meet God’s standard. The law was man’s last trial, whether, with a revelation of God’s mind, he could or would obey it. But this trial, like the others, ended in failure: “there was none righteous, no, not one.” How, then, was man to be reconciled to God? How could he be brought to meet God’s requirements? One way yet remained, and the Son of God accepted it. “He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took the seed of Abraham”; and in His person, once and for ever, man was reconciled to God. In effecting this, Jesus, as man’s representative, took man’s place, where He found man, under law; and there, in obedience to the law, He offered, “for His acceptance.” 3. The third point peculiar to the burnt-offering was, that a life was offered on the altar (ver. 5), in this particular differing from the meat-offering. Life was that part in creation which from the beginning God claimed as His. As such—as being His claim on His creatures—it stands as an emblem for what we owe Him. What we owe to God is our duty to Him. And this, I doubt not, is the thought here intended. Of course, the offering here, as elsewhere, is the body of Jesus, that body which He took, and then gave for us: but in giving God a life, in contradistinction to offering Him corn or frankincense, the peculiar thought is the fulfilment of the first table of the Decalogue. Thus the life yielded is man’s duty to God, and man here is seen perfectly giving it. Am I asked what man ever thus offered? I answer, None but One—“the man Christ Jesus.” He alone of all the sons of Adam in perfectness accomplished all man’s duty to Godward; He in His own blessed and perfect

righteousness met every claim God could make upon Him. 4. The fourth and last feature peculiar to the burnt-offering is, that it was wholly burnt on the altar. In this particular the burnt-offering differed from the meat and peace-offerings, in which a part only was burnt with fire; nor did it differ less from those offerings for sin, which, though wholly burnt, were not burnt upon the altar. The import of this distinction is manifest, and in exact keeping with the character of the offering. Man's duty to God is not the giving up of one faculty, but the entire surrender of all. So Christ sums up the First Commandment—all the mind, all the soul, all the affections. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." I cannot doubt that the type refers to this in speaking so particularly of the parts of the burnt-offering; for "the head," "the fat," "the legs," "the inwards," are all distinctly enumerated. "The head" is the well-known emblem of the thoughts; "the legs" the emblem of the walk; and "the inwards" the constant and familiar symbol of the feelings and affections of the heart. The meaning of "the fat" may not be quite so obvious, though here also Scripture helps us to the solution (Psa. xvii. 10, xcii. 14, cxix. 70; Deut. xxxii. 15). It represents the energy not of one limb or faculty, but the general health and vigour of the whole. In Jesus these were all surrendered, and all without spot or blemish. II. ITS VARIETIES, that is, the different measures of apprehension with which it may be seen. There were, then, three grades in the burnt-offering. It might be "of the herd," or "of the flock," or "of fowls." These different grades gave rise to several varieties in the offering, the import of which we shall now consider. 1. The first difference is in the animal offered. We have in the first grade, "a bullock"; in the second, "a lamb"; in the third, "a turtledove." Each of these animals, from their well-known character, presents us with a different thought respecting the offering. The bullock, "strong to labour"—for "great increase is by the strength of the ox"—suggests at once the thought of service, of patient, untiring labour. In the lamb we have another picture presented to us; here the thought is passive submission without a murmur; for the lamb is the figure constantly chosen to represent the submissive, uncomplaining character of Christ's sufferings. The turtledove is different from either of these, and gives again another view of the offering of Jesus. In this class the thought of labour is lost sight of: the un murmuring submission, too, of the lamb is wanting: the thought is rather simply one of mourning innocence; as it is written, "We mourn like doves"; and again, "Be harmless as doves." It may be asked, What do we learn by "the goat," which was sometimes offered in one of the lower grades of the burnt-offering? If I mistake not, this emblem suggests a thought of the sin-offering, reminding us of Christ's offering as scape-goat. 2. A second distinction between the different grades of the burnt-offering is, that while in the first grade the parts are discriminated, in the last this peculiarity is omitted: the bird was killed, but not divided. In the case of the bullock and the lamb, it is noticed that the offering is "cut into its pieces." Here "the legs, the head, the fat, the inwards," are all distinctly noticed and enumerated. In the last case—that of the turtledove—it is otherwise: "he shall not divide it asunder." "The legs, the head, the inwards," as we have already seen, represent the walk, the thoughts, the feelings of Jesus. In the first grade these are all apprehended: they are all lost sight of in the last. These grades represent, as I have said, measures of apprehension. Where the measure of spiritual apprehension is large, a saint will see the offering dissected: his eyes will be turning constantly to see the walk, the mind, the affections of Jesus. He will now observe, what once he regarded not, how Jesus walked, how He thought, what were His feelings. On the other hand, where Jesus is but little apprehended all the details of His walk and feelings will be unseen. 3. A third distinction between the different grades of the burnt-offering is, that while in the first grade the offerer is seen to lay his hand on the offering, in the other grades this act is not observed. Not a few see Christ as offering for us without fully realising that His offering was Himself. They see that He gave up this thing or that; that He gave much for us, and that what He gave was most precious. But they do not really see that "He gave Himself," that His own blessed person was what He offered. This is clearly seen in the first grade of the burnt-offering. It is lost sight of, or unobserved, in the other grades. 4. A fourth distinction, closely allied with the one just considered, is, that in the first class the offerer is seen to kill the victim—in the last the priest kills it. In fact, in the last class, the priest does nearly everything, the offerer is scarcely seen at all; whereas in the first class it is just the reverse, there are many particulars noted of the

offerer. The import of this is at once obvious, when we see the distinction between the priest and offerer. The offerer, as I have already observed, sets Christ before us in His person. The priest represents Him in His official character, as the appointed Mediator between God and man. Where the identity between the offerer and offering is apprehended, the offerer is seen to kill the offering; that is, Christ is seen in His person, of His own will laying down His life; as it is written—"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of Myself." On the contrary, where the identity of the offering and offerer is unseen or disregarded, the priest is seen to kill the victim, that is, Christ's death is seen as the work of the Mediator; and is connected with His official character as Priest, rather than with His person as the willing offerer. So with believers, where there is only a limited measure of apprehension, little is known of Christ save His office as Mediator: He Himself, His blessed person, is overlooked or but little seen. Such are the chief varieties of the burnt-offering: how full are they of instruction to the believer; how clearly do they mark the different apprehensions among saints respecting the work and person of our Lord! Some, however—I speak of believers—are content to know nothing of this; and they would rather not be told their ignorance. They can see but one truth—the Paschal lamb—and anything further they neither care nor wish for. (*A. Jukes.*)

The burnt-offering.—I. CHARACTERISTICS. 1. Perfect. 2. Voluntary. 3. Vicarious. 4. Slain by offerer himself. 5. Blood sprinkled. 6. Wholly consumed. II. FEATURES WHICH DISTINGUISH IT FROM THE SIN-OFFERING. 1. Nothing is said of the voluntary character of the sin-offering. Does not this throw light on the agony and prayer of Christ in Gethsemane? 2. Only parts of the sin-offering were to be burnt on the altar of burnt-offering (Heb. iv. 11, 12, xiii. 11-13; 2 Cor. v. 21). This explains the suffering of Christ and His cry on the cross—"Eloi," &c. III. TO OBSERVE THESE DISTINCTIONS IMPORTANT, AS BEARING UPON THEIR TYPICAL SIGNIFICATION. 1. The Epistle to the Hebrews proves that Christ and His work are typified in the whole Mosaic ritual. 2. The one represents our Lord in His consecration to His Father's will; the other, as its name indicates, represents Him as the sin-bearer. (1) His consecration has in it the elements of voluntariness and completeness, and that it was of sweet savour unto Jehovah. (2) As sin-bearer He is represented as not being permitted to suffer even within the camp. Lessons: 1. As a burnt-offering our Lord is to us an example in our consecration to God, which should be—(1) Perfect in its sincerity. (2) Cheerful in its spirit. (3) Unreserved in its degree. 2. As a sin-offering our Lord teaches us how hateful sin was to Him; yet He endured its imputation, "being made sin for us," that we might be made God's righteousness in Him. (*D. C. Hughes, M.A.*) *Significance of the burnt-offering*.—To be offered—1. Orderly. 2. Openly. 3. Devoutly. 4. Cheerfully. (*F. W. Brown.*) *The burnt-offering*.—I. Consider THE SORT OF VICTIM REQUIRED FOR THIS SACRIFICE: a bullock, or a sheep, or, in case of great poverty, a young pigeon or dove—the very purest, cleanest, and best of creatures—nothing else would answer. And even these had to be the finest and most desirable specimens. Pure and perfect as the bright world from which He came, Christ, our sacrifice, "was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners"—"a Lamb without spot"—the first, the purest, the gentlest, and the best in all the domain of the great God. He was the very Prince of creation, who knew no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. II. Consider next WHAT WAS DONE WITH THE VICTIM SELECTED. If a bullock, the Divine command was, "Kill it before the Lord, and flay it, and cut it into his pieces." If from the flock, the word was "Kill it on the side of the altar northward, and cut it into his pieces." Who was to do this is not clearly specified. Any one, good or bad, priest or private, the worst or best, may become the executioner of the Divine sentence. When Jesus was made an offering for us, earth and hell joined in the infliction of the sacrificial stroke. If a bird, the word of the Lord was, "Wring off his head, and pluck away his crop with his feathers, and cleave it with the wings." Fit picture this of the end which awaits the unforgiven, and of what actually befell the blessed Saviour who "was once offered to bear the sins of many." The plucking and tearing off of the skin was to show how naked the sinner is, and how completely he is exposed to the fires of Divine wrath, and how unprotected Jesus was when He submitted to bear our sins in His own body on the tree. But in addition to this terrible mutilation, the victim was yet to be put upon the altar and burned. The command was, "The priest shall burn all on the altar." And a particular method was also to be observed in this burning. First, the head and the loose fat were to be placed upon the fire; the head from without, and the fat from within. After that the legs and the

entrails were to be given to the flames; the outward and the inward together. Man has a double nature; and in all Divine services, and under all Divine inflictions, both departments fare alike. We cannot give our bodies to God and reserve our hearts, nor serve Him in the spirit without bringing that service out into controlling influence over the flesh also. The whole man must go or nothing. Nor is the ultimate doom of sin a mere bodily suffering, or the mere consuming of the exterior members; nor yet mere mental woe and spiritual grief. As the Saviour says, it is the destruction of "both body and soul in hell." Christ as our sacrifice, suffered not only in the outer man, but in His whole inner and outer nature conjoined.

III. Consider further WHAT WAS TO BE EFFECTED BY THE PRESENTATION OF THIS PARTICULAR KIND OF SACRIFICE. If the man who brought it would lay his hand upon its head, and so acknowledge it as that by which he hoped and prayed and trusted to be forgiven, the Lord said "it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him." That is, the devoting of such a victim to death and fire was to answer as a substitute for the death and burning of the sinner himself. What a beautiful illustration of our reconciliation to God through the death of His Son! IV. There yet remains one other particular to be noticed with regard to this atoning offering; and that is THE PERFECT FREEDOM WITH WHICH ANY AND EVERY ONE MIGHT AVAIL HIMSELF OF ITS BENEFITS. It was confined to no special time, and demanded no specific juncture of affairs. It was as free at one season as at another, and could be resorted to whenever any one felt himself moved in that way. If the worshipper could not bring a bullock, a sheep would answer. And if too poor to furnish either, a dove or pigeon was just as acceptable. There was no reason why any one should not come and share the benefits of a full expiation through the burnt-offering of atonement. All that a man wanted was the consent and determination of his own heart—the motion of "his own voluntary will." Now this was not accidental. It was meant to set forth a great gospel truth. It tells of the perfect freeness with which one and all may be saved, if only there is the proper effort made. It was the lifting up of the voice of mercy even in that remote antiquity, crying, "Come; whosoever will, let him come." (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *The burnt-offering; or, the Father glorified*:—I. THE BURNT-OFFERING is placed first in order, when the Lord spake unto Moses "out of the Tabernacle," teaching that the primary and grand object of Christ's death was "the glory of God." The burnt-offering may be said to answer to St. John's Gospel, where this object is very prominent (see John xii. 27-33, xvii. 1-4). 1. Atonement, as expiation of guilt, is not the prominent thought in burnt-offering, yet it is seen there, verifying Heb. ix. 22; and the sprinkling of the blood testifies to the righteousness of God in accepting the worshipper whose worship—like all else—needs the atoning blood, being in itself not only worthless, but tainted with sin; and worship is one prominent feature of burnt-offering as regards man. Now look at details. 2. Male without blemish. That is, highest order of offering, whether of herd or flock (chap. i. 3, 10). Nothing with slightest taint or blemish must be used to represent Christ. II. ACCEPTANCE was another prominent characteristic of burnt-offering. It was presented that the offerer might be "accepted" (chap. i. 3). "Lo! I come . . . to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. x. 7; Psa. xl. 7), were the words of Jesus. He presented Himself for acceptance; He was "obedient unto death" (Phil. ii. 8). His sacrifice was that of devotion and service, as typified in this offering. Thus was the Father glorified in the death of His beloved Son! See, too, how Father's love drawn forth because He laid down His life for sheep (John x. 11, 17), in obedience to Father's will (John vi. 38-40). Thus the Father's glory seen to be bound up in the salvation of "sheep"; and His acceptance of Jesus ensures theirs (chap. i. 4; Eph. i. 6). III. HAND UPON HEAD OF BURNT-OFFERING further shows identification of offerer and offering. The word rendered "put" (ver. 4) signifies to lean with whole weight, which implies full reliance, trust, and transfer, so to speak, of whole being to Him, who both amply met God's claim to entire devotedness to Him and made atonement for His people, that is, "covered" their failures with His atoning merits and sacrifice. Believers are "in Him" (1 John v. 20), and thus God sees and accepts them. IV. KILL, . . . FLAY, . . . CUT INTO HIS PIECES (vers. 5, 6). Significant actions. Not only death, but all laid bare to be exposed to searching fire of God's holiness, and testify to the perfections of His Christ, whether in part or whole. Believers should look into Christ, and study His perfections in every detail. There is also a "rightly dividing the Word of truth" (2 Tim. ii. 15), which testifies of Jesus the living Word. Again, "His pieces," typifying "members of His body," are laid bare before God; all within revealed, *i.e.*, "naked and opened . . ." (Heb. iv. 13),

to the Searcher of hearts (Psa. vii. 9; Luke xvi. 15); and He requires holiness within (1 Pet. i. 15, 16). V. "THE PRIESTS, AARON'S SONS" (vers. 5-8) represent "the Church of God," "the children" (Heb. ii. 13), an holy priesthood" (1 Pet. ii. 5): here seen as worshipping saints, offering to God what most "acceptable" to Him. 1. They "sprinkle the blood," showing ground of acceptable worship (1 Pet. i. 2). 2. They "put fire," and lay all "in order" "upon the altar." Christ, the Head, in His entirety, with His rich excellency (fat), offering Himself (voluntary act), through the eternal Spirit (fire), without spot to God (Heb. ix. 14). "Many waters cannot quench love" (Song of Sol. viii. 7), such as His, glowing with the fire of the Spirit, shown in zeal and devotion to the Father's will. And no work for God, no offering acceptable, except through the fire of the Spirit (Rom. viii. 4, 8-10, 14), sent from above to dwell in believers, and kindle in them flame of love and zeal, which again ascends to heaven. VI. THE WASHING OF INWARDS AND LEGS (ver. 9) rendered the offering typically what Christ is inherently and intrinsically. Perfectly clean and pure, not only in outward walk, but inwardly also; in exact accordance with the requirements of a holy God. Truth, wisdom found in Him who was both (Psa. li. 6, xv. 2; John xiv. 6; Prov. viii. 11, 30; 1 Cor. i. 24). VII. THE PRIEST SHALL BURN ALL (ver. 13). The whole of the burnt-offering was to be consumed upon the altar, because exclusively for God. God requires whole-heartedness in His service; want of devotedness to God is sin; we offend if we keep back part for ourselves, or for the world, instead of presenting all to Him; and these failures, sins, shortcomings, are all met by the precious One in the burnt-offering. VIII. THE ASHES CARRIED FORTH from beside the altar testify to the completeness of the work "finished" on Calvary, and to God's complete acceptance of the perfect Sacrifice, His own "unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. ix. 15) to man. The "clean place" "without the camp" (chaps. i. 16, vi. 10, 11) points to the "new tomb" (Matt. xxvii. 58-66), where the body of Jesus was laid; and He—the risen One—then entered "into heaven itself, now to appear . . ." (Heb. ix. 24). IX. "A SWEET SAVOUR UNTO THE LORD" (vers. 9, 13, 17). As such the "continual" burnt-offering ascended (Numb. xxviii. 3-8); and so the fragrant merits of Christ's one all-sufficient sacrifice. For "Christ also hath . . . given Himself for . . . a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. v. 2). Yes, Jesus, who is feasting the Father's eyes and heart, is the one in whom He smells "a sweet savour" or "savour of rest" (Gen. viii. 21). (*Lady Beaujolois Dent.*) *The burnt-offering:*—Concerning this offering we note—I. THE PRINCIPLE THAT ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP MUST BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH DIVINE DIRECTION. Not now the blood of bulls and of goats, but the blood of Christ is the sacrifice by which we come to God (Heb. x. 9, 10). The way is as distinctly and definitely described under the new dispensation as under the old (John xiv. 6). True religion is a revealed way of approach to God. II. ITS SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE. Its Hebrew name means, "an ascending." The first symbol by which men sought communion with God expressed a voluntary and entire dedication of themselves to Him. They declared, by it, their aspiration after Him; their desire to do His will; their self-surrender to Him. It was this devotion of soul that made the offering a sweet savour unto Him. III. THE RELATION OF THE BURNT-OFFERING TO CHRISTIAN WORSHIP. 1. This offering suggests the holiness of God. 2. The spirit of acceptable Christian worship: Pure. 3. The character of the acceptable Christian worshipper: Constant self-devotion to God. (*A. E. Dunning.*) *The burnt-offering:*—The burnt-offering was one of what might be called the common law offerings of mankind. There were two of these at least—the slain and the burnt-offering. It is not always possible to distinguish these in the early history of sacrifices. The former was one in which slain beasts were laid upon the altar in token of man's fellowship with God; the latter was one where the animals were burned with fire as incense to Jehovah, expressive of man's dependence, obedience, and need of forgiveness. The burnt-offering was the most significant of all these earlier sacrifices, and probably included at times all the others. It is fitting for this reason, as well as for its superior importance, that it occupy the first place in the directions of the sacrificial code for Israel. The law of burnt-offerings was one which now became invested with the new sovereignty of a statute. It was not superseded in its significance or any of its associations, but some of these were emphasised. Branches grew out of the stalk which had its roots in the first sinner's heart and the earliest race history. I. THE IDEA OF SELF-SURRENDER UNDERLAYS THE GIFT OF THE BURNT-OFFERING. Save on great occasions, like that of a dedication of the Tabernacle or Temple, this was a voluntary offering. As men were urged onward into clearly marked modes of worship they were not deprived of their upward look. Before there is expiation or justification there must be a relation of

fellowship between man and his Maker. The burnt-offering was the best symbol of this confidential self-surrender because it was the sacrifice of a living thing. The blood was regarded as the vehicle of the life. When the Hebrew came of his own choice thus before the Lord he made an offering of himself. II. THE IDEA OF EXPIATION UNDERLAY THE OFFERING OF THE BURNT SACRIFICE. The Israelite who came before the altar to make a burnt-offering laid his hand upon the victim in token of his desire to have it accepted as a sacrifice for sin. The great breaches of the moral law were not atoned for by any ceremonial under the Hebrew code. The most flagrant sins which were atoned for or covered by sacrifice were those of carelessness, and had reference to a breach of ceremonial law. Therefore we are justified in emphasising in the burnt-offering the idea of self-surrender. The expiation of the murderer's sin must come from a sacrifice God should make in His own Son. The sinner took refuge with God in the hope of the holier offering and Mediator God should provide. III. THE ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE OF THE BURNT-OFFERING REQUIRES THE MEDIATORIAL OFFICE. The worshipper has accepted the offices of God's mediator. God has received man's trust, his surrender, his obedience. The spirit of Abraham with raised hand above his only son is that which must fill the heart of every true worshipper under the Mosaic dispensation. He accepts God's offering as a sacrifice, whether made before the foundation of the world, at the Tabernacle altar, or on Calvary. Obedience is the best element man furnishes in the atonement. Obedience to the unseen God is the arrow of which faith is the bow-string. (*W. R. Campbell.*)

The gospel of the burnt-offering:—I. The offerer was to BRING IT TO THE DOOR OF THE TABERNACLE. 1. A voluntary act. (1) Christ died willingly. (2) So should we in all our services be a willing people. 2. This points every way to Christ as the cause of our acceptance with God. He is both Door and Tabernacle, Altar and Priest. 3. We are to see God in all our services, in and by Jesus Christ. 4. We are to worship God in His Church. II. The sinner that brought the sacrifice was to LAY HIS HAND UPON THE HEAD OF IT. This ceremony relates to the confession of sin, and the translation of the guilt of it upon the sacrifice (Isa. liii. 4, 5; 1 John i. 7, 9). III. The sacrifice must be KILLED AND SLAIN, and that upon the north side of the altar. 1. The death of Christ (Dan. ix. 26; Isa. liii. 10). 2. Christ was killed in Jerusalem and Mount Zion, which was on the sides of the north. IV. THE BLOOD WAS POURED FORTH at the foot of the altar, and sprinkled upon it round about. 1. Christ's blood was shed (Isa. liii. 12; Matt. xxvi. 28). 2. Sprinkled (Heb. xii. 24; 1 Pet. i. 2). V. THE PRIEST IS TO FLAY IT, AND CUT IT INTO ITS PIECES. 1. This related in general to the sufferings of Christ (Micah iii. 2, 3; Psa. xxii. 15, 16). 2. As the sacrifice, being dead and slain, did leave a skin for clothing to the priest by whose hand he died, so Christ, our true sacrifice, who was led as a lamb to the slaughter, leaves a garment of righteousness to clothe believers with (Rom. xiii. 14). 3. Whereas the sacrifice in this action was laid open, and the inward parts of it discovered to open view: so is Christ fully and openly discovered in the preaching of the gospel (Gal. iii. 1). 4. The skin of the sacrifice went to the priest. It was part of his maintenance (see Cor. ix. 13, 14). VI. THE PIECES WERE TO BE SALTED (chap. ii. 13; Mark ix. 49). 1. This signifies the perpetuity of the covenant of grace. 2. Its wholesomeness. VII. THE LEGS AND INWARDS MUST BE WASHED. So the bodies of believers are said to be washed with pure water, and their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. VIII. The several parts of the offering must be LAID UPON THE ALTAR, AND BURNT WITH FIRE, TILL CONSUMED. This is the fire of the justice and wrath of God from heaven, which seized upon Christ; and every part of Him was burnt: His head crowned with thorns, His side pierced with the spear, His hands and feet with nails, His whole body did sweat drops of blood, His soul was heavy unto death, yea, burnt to ashes, as it were, brought to the utmost extremity of misery. His saints also endure the fiery trial (1 Pet. iv. 12). IX. THE ASHES MUST BE CARRIED OUT OF THE CAMP INTO A CLEAN PLACE (chap. vi. 10, 11; see Heb. xiii. 11-13). Christ's crucified body was not buried within the city, but placed in a new sepulchre where never any man lay before (John xix. 41). So the dead bodies of all His saints, when they are spent and consumed to ashes, are regarded and preserved in the dust by God as sacred relics, and He will raise them up again unto eternal life. Lessons: 1. See here the difference between God's ceremonies and men's. Divine ceremonies are full of light and spirit; human ceremonies are full of darkness and vanity. 2. See the fierceness of the wrath of God against sin. It is nothing but death and blood and slaughter that will appease offended justice. 3. Direction under the guilt of sin what to do, and what course to take, to make atonement and reconciliation between God and thee. Go and bring your

sacrifice to the Priest, and by Him unto God. 4. Unspeakable consolation unto them that have taken this course. (*S. Mather.*) *The burnt-offering*:—An offerer comes. Mark what he brings. If his offering be from the herd, it must be an unblemished male (chap. i. 3). It must be the choicest produce from his pastures—the primest flower from his fields. There must be strength in fullest vigour, and beauty without one alloy. Such are the properties required. The purport is distinct. Jesus is here. The victim chosen before worlds were framed is thus portrayed. Strength and perfection are main colours in His portrait. We next approach the chambers of the offerer's heart. We read, "He shall offer it of his own free will" (chap. i. 3). There is no compulsion. There is no reluctance. His step is willingness. This is a picture of faith's happy actings. Its chariot-wheels move swiftly. It feels sin's miserable need. It knows the value of redeeming blood. So it flies, with rapid wing, to plead it at the mercy-seat. The eager offerer puts his hand upon the victim's head (chap. i. 4). Do any ask the meaning of this rite? It graphically shows a transfer. Some load oppresses, which is thus cast off. Some burden passes to another's person. Here is again the happy work of faith. It brings all guilt, and heaps it on the Saviour's head. One sin retained is misery now and hell at last. All must be pardoned by being brought to Christ. And He is waiting to receive. The victim, to which sins thus typically pass, must die (chap. i. 5). Can Jesus, who in reality receives our guilt, not lay down life? It cannot be. The holy Word stands sure: "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die" (Gen. ii. 17). The sinner's surety, then, cannot be spared. He gives His life to pay the debt—to satisfy the wrath—to bear the curse—to expiate the guilt. O my soul, "Christ died" is all your hope—your plea—your remedy—your life. "Christ died" opens your path to God. The victim's blood is sprinkled "round about upon the altar" (chap. i. 5). The blood is evidence that life is paid. This token then is profusely scattered. The victim is next flayed (chap. i. 6). The skin is torn away. The sacrificing priest received this as his portion. Here is a picture of that heaven-pure robe, in which Christ decks each child of faith. His blood, indeed, removes all curse. But it is obedience, which merits all glory. Because He died, we live. Because He lived, we reign. The piercing knife divides the limbs. Members are torn from members, and all the parts, without, within, to which defilement usually adheres, are diligently washed (chap. i. 9). The type of Jesus must be clean. No shadow of impurity may darken it. The parts thus severed, and thus washed, are placed upon the altar. Consuming fire is brought. It preys on every limb. The raging flame devours, until this fuel is reduced to ashes (chap. i. 9). Let us now seek the truth, which echoes from this blazing pile. The Garden and the Cross unfold it. There Jesus presents Himself, laden with all the sins of all His chosen race. (*Dean Law.*) *The burnt-offering*:—"If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male, without blemish." The essential glory and dignity of Christ's Person form the basis of Christianity. He imparts that dignity and glory to everything He does, and to every office He sustains. We shall see, when we come to examine the other offerings, that "a female" was, in some cases, permitted; but that was only expressive of the imperfection which attached to the worshipper's apprehension, and in nowise of any defect in the offering, inasmuch as it was "unblemished" in the one case, as well as in the other. Here, however, it was an offering of the very highest order, because it was Christ offering Himself to God. "He shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord." The use of the word "voluntary," here, brings out, with great clearness, the grand idea in the burnt-offering. It leads us to contemplate the Cross in an aspect which is not sufficiently apprehended. We are too apt to look upon the Cross merely as the place where the great question of sin was gone into and settled, between eternal Justice and the spotless Victim—as the place where our guilt was atoned for, and where Satan was gloriously vanquished. Eternal and universal praise to redeeming love! the Cross was all this. But it was more than this. It was the place where Christ's love to the Father was told out in language which only the Father could hear and understand. It is in the latter aspect that we have it typified, in the burnt-offering; and therefore it is that the word "voluntary" occurs. The guilty sinner, no doubt, finds in the Cross a Divine answer to the deepest and most earnest cravings of heart and conscience. The true believer finds in the Cross that which captivates every affection of his heart, and transfixes his whole moral being. The angels find in the Cross a theme for ceaseless admiration. All this is true; but there is that, in the Cross, which passes far beyond the loftiest conceptions of saints or angels; namely, the deep-toned devotion of the heart of the Son presented to, and appreciated by, the heart of the

Father. This is the elevated aspect of the Cross, which is so strikingly shadowed forth in the burnt-offering. "And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering; and it shall be accepted for him, to make atonement for him." The act of laying on of hands was expressive of full identification. By that significant act the offerer and the offering became one; and this oneness, in the case of the burnt-offering, secured for the offerer all the acceptableness of his offering. The application of this to Christ and the believer sets forth a truth of the most precious nature, and one largely developed in the New Testament; namely, the believer's everlasting identification with, and acceptance in, Christ. "As He is, so are we, in this world." "We are in Him that is true" (1 John iv. 17; v. 20). Nothing, in any measure, short of this could avail. "And he shall kill the bullock before the Lord: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation." It is most needful, in studying the doctrine of the burnt-offering, to bear in mind that the grand point set forth therein is not the meeting of the sinner's need, but the presentation to God of that which was infinitely acceptable to Him. Christ, as foreshadowed by the burnt-offering, is not for the sinner's conscience, but for the heart of God. Further, the Cross, in the burnt-offering, is not the exhibition of the exceeding hatefulfulness of sin, but of Christ's unshaken and unshakable devotedness to the Father. Neither is it the scene of God's outpoured wrath on Christ the Sin-bearer; but of the Father's unmingled complacency in Christ, the voluntary and most fragrant sacrifice. Finally, "atonement," as seen in the burnt-offering, is not merely commensurate with the claims of man's conscience, but with the intense desire of the heart of Christ, to carry out the will and establish the counsels of God—a desire which stopped not short of surrendering up His spotless, precious life, as "a voluntary offering" of "sweet savour" to God. "The priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation." Here we have a type of the Church, bringing the memorial of an accomplished sacrifice, and presenting it in the place of individual approach to God. But, we must remember, it is the blood of the burnt-offering, and not of the sin-offering. It is the Church, in the power of the Holy Ghost, entering into the stupendous thought of Christ's accomplished devotedness to God, and not a convicted sinner, entering into the value of the blood of the Sin-bearer. "And he shall flay the burnt-offering, and cut it into his pieces." The ceremonial act of "flaying" was peculiarly expressive. It was simply the removing of the outward covering, in order that what was within might be fully revealed. It was not sufficient that the offering should be, outwardly, "without blemish," "the hidden parts" should be all disclosed, in order that every sinew and every joint might be seen. It was only in the case of the burnt-offering that this action was specially named. This is quite in character, and tends to set forth the depth of Christ's devotedness to the Father. It was no mere surface-work with Him. The more the secrets of His inner life were disclosed, the more the depths of His being were explored, the more clearly was it made manifest that pure devotion to the will of His Father, and earnest desire for His glory, were the springs of action in the great Antitype of the burnt-offering. He was, most assuredly, a whole burnt-offering. "And cut it into his pieces." This action presents a somewhat similar truth to that taught in the "sweet incense beaten small" (chap. xvi.). The Holy Ghost delights to dwell upon the sweetness and fragrance of the sacrifice of Christ, not only as a whole, but also in all its minute details. Look at the burnt-offering, as a whole, and you see it without blemish. Look at it in all its parts, and you see it to be the same. Such was Christ; and as such He is shadowed forth in this important type. "And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire. And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts," &c. This was a high position—high communion—a high order of priestly service—a striking type of the Church having fellowship with God, in reference to the perfect accomplishment of His will in the death of Christ. As convicted sinners we gaze on the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and behold therein that which meets all our need. The Cross, in this aspect of it, gives perfect peace to the conscience. But, then, as priests, as purged worshippers, as members of the priestly family, we can look at the Cross in another light, even as the grand consummation of Christ's holy purpose to carry out, even unto death, the will of the Father. "But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord." This action rendered the sacrifice, typically, what Christ was essentially, pure, both inwardly and

outwardly pure. The members of His body perfectly obeyed and carried out the counsels of His devoted heart—that heart which only beat for God, and for His glory, in the salvation of men. Well, therefore, might the priest “burn all on the altar.” It was all typically pure, and all designed only as food for the altar of God. (*C. H. Mackintosh.*) *The burnt-offering*:—In the burnt-offering the atoning element of sacrifice fell into the background, though not wholly absent; there is no special manipulation of the blood, as in the sin-offering; all centres on the entire consumption of the sacrifice upon the altar, which was especially the altar of burnt-offering. The burnt-offering was, then, peculiarly the offering of worship. And the offerer was set forth as being “a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.” The principal burnt-offering under the law was the daily, or continual, burnt-offering (Exod. xxix. 38–42; cf. Numb. xxviii. 3–8, Lev. vi. 9–12). Nothing was ever allowed to interfere with this “continual” burnt-offering. “The great national offering of Israel,” says Archdeacon Freeman, “the morning and evening lamb, was simply the ancient burnt-offering, or the Mosaic offering of private persons, lifted into a new sphere of power and activity. The directions given in the two cases are, as far as they go (cf. Numb. xxviii. with Lev. i. 1–13), perfectly coincident; even to the quantity of flour, wine, and oil. Inasmuch that the lofty powers wielded by the continual sacrifice might well seem at first sight unaccountable. But they are fully accounted for when we call to mind the august circumstances with which this particular offering was surrounded. These, joined to the direct command and promise of God in respect of it, render an abundant account of the transcendent powers which are ascribed to it. And though we might on some accounts rather have expected to find the ox or the ram selected, for their physical superiority and greater value, as the national and all-containing sacrifice, we easily perceive, from the standing-ground of the gospel, the superior fitness for this purpose of the feeblest, meekest, and most unresisting of creatures. At the same time, even as the Divine “strength was made perfect in the weakness” of Christ, so this outwardly simple and single sacrifice was seen, on occasion, to carry within it all that was noble and powerful in the sacrificial sphere. On each Sabbath it expanded into two lambs, offered morning and evening; at the new moons, and other feasts, it became seven lambs, two young bullocks, a ram, and a goat; on each day, during the Feast of Tabernacles, fourteen lambs, from eight to thirteen bullocks, two rams, and a goat, became, in a word, “fat burnt sacrifices, with incense of rams, bullocks, and goats.” By all these was manifested forth the might that was veiled under the meekness of the lamb. . . . It is of the utmost importance thus to have pointed out the function and capacities of the ancient burnt-offering, because the sacrificial work of Christ is to so great a degree interpreted to us by it, and specially by that loftily empowered instance of it, the Mosaic continual sacrifice. To this is to be referred whatever is said in the New Testament, and in the Liturgies, of His *giving* Himself, as a most unspeakably acceptable gift to God; as discriminated either from His “giving” or delivering Himself over for suffering and death, to wicked men and powers of evil, which is more especially set forth by the sin-offering; or again, as distinguished from His giving Himself to man as the life of his soul, which was represented by the “peace-offering.” The *continual* burnt-offering represents also our Lord’s perpetual presentation of His sacrifice in heaven, that sacrifice which St. Athanasius calls “a faithful sacrifice, one which remains and does not pass away.” (*E. F. Willis, M.A.*) *The burnt-offering*:—The leading feature of the burnt-offering consisted in its being *wholly* consumed upon the altar. What have we here but a type of the preciousness of Jesus, as exhibited in His whole-hearted devotedness, His entire consecration to the will and service of His Father? Is not His language in the fortieth Psalm, “Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God. Yea, Thy law is within My heart”—precisely the language of the “Burnt-Offering”? Again, in John, “I seek not My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.” Who but Jesus could say, “I do always those things that please Him”? Isolated acts of devotedness we may and do see exhibited by many of His followers. But in the Man Christ Jesus we see one who through life, and in death could say, “My meat and My drink is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work”—One who loved and served “the Lord His God with all His heart, His soul, His strength”—One, therefore, who met in every respect the requirements of the type before us. Before the victim for the burnt-offering was placed upon the altar, it was flayed and cut into pieces, and the parts thereof, “the head and feet,” laid “in order upon the wood.” This was a testing process, and served to try the animal’s fitness for

the sacrifice. Jesus was tried. Tried by man. Tried by Satan. Tried by God. His thoughts, the feelings of His heart, His words, His every act—all were laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom He had to do. Yet all bore the test. The minutest examination of His inner as well as His outer life failed to disclose aught but consisted with the purest and most perfect devotion to His Father's will. He Himself could say, "Thou hast proved Mine heart, Thou hast visited Me in the night, Thou hast tried Me and shalt find nothing." Whilst His Father from the excellent glory declared, "Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." In other words, "I rest in Thee and am satisfied. My holiness rests in Thee and is satisfied. My justice, My truth, all the essential attributes which I possess as Jehovah, all are satisfied." All My most righteous claims are met to the full. Thou art unto Me a perfect burnt-offering. "A sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour." But not only was the burnt-offering one of a "sweet-smelling savour" to God, it was rich also in results towards the offerer. It stood in his stead. All its perfectness was regarded as if it had been his. In its acceptance he was accepted. So with Christ's sacrifice (see Eph. v. 2; Rom. v. 19). (*F. H. White.*) *The burnt-offerings aptly commence the sacrificial laws*:—First, they were probably the oldest form of sacrifice. In the next place, they had the very widest application, and could be presented by any person without distinction, a point which is the more significant as the offerer, sharing the sacred functions with the priests, had to perform several important parts of the ceremony himself. And lastly, though originally designed to convey merely the worshipper's awe and his unconditional surrender to the Divine supremacy, they were, in the Levitical code, invested with the character of atonement (ver. 4), and were not only commanded on specified occasions, but left to the spontaneous impulse of the heart that yearns for peace and for the expiation of sins known to the transgressor alone. They were therefore meant to serve the highest ends of an inward religion. Thus modified, they marked a decided progress in the path of spiritual faith; they were, in fact, the forerunners of the expiatory offerings which form the very crowning point of the sacrificial system, and beyond which, even at the very next step, the mind leaves the fetters of the ceremonial law and enters the purer regions of freedom and elevation. Hence the Levitical holocausts lead us to a time when the deep-rooted tendencies towards pagan idolatry had been conquered, and the intellectual efforts of the more thoughtful and more gifted among the Hebrews had been rewarded by the establishment of a religious creed, which, however far removed from absolute truth, and however repugnant to the true attributes of the Deity and the requirements of philosophy and reason, at least permitted the exercise of noble and exalted humanity, and even facilitated, more than any of the preceding and most of the later systems of theology, an insight into the moral government of the world, and the higher aims of human existence. Thus the very beginning of the Book reveals unmistakably the time and purposes of its composition, and forms the first link in that great chain of evidence which leads to the most pregnant and most interesting historical results. (*M. M. Kalisch, Ph.D.*) *The burnt-offering*:—Here we are so accustomed to fall short of God's glory, and failure in glorifying Him is so much regarded as the necessary law of our condition, that even believers find it difficult to look on failure in devotedness as sin—sin that needs atonement as much as their most dire transgressions. Even after we have owned the blood of the Paschal Lamb as delivering from the judgment due to our natural condition, and after we have recognised the necessity of the Holy One bearing the curse earned by our transgressions, we nevertheless fail to estimate the want of perfect devotedness as being positive sin; and hence the appreciation of our own condition, as well as of the grace that meets it, becomes proportionately enfeebled. In order to correct this error—an error fatal to all right apprehension of God, and our relation both to His holiness and to His grace—the first lesson given to us in the Tabernacle respects the whole burnt-offering. In other offerings part was sometimes given to the priest, sometimes to the offerer; but the burnt-offering was all (the skin only excepted) rendered to God, and all burnt upon His altar. In the burnt-offering, therefore, there was a distinct recognition of the righteous claim of God on the unreserved devotedness of His creatures; but it was also the confession that that claim was responded to by none. When an offerer presented a victim to be accepted in his room, the very act of substitution implied that the offerer acknowledged himself to be destitute of the qualifications which were found in his offering; otherwise substitution would not be needed, for the offerer would stand in his own integrity. There was the confession, too, that the absence of these qualifications involved

guilt—guilt deserving death; for otherwise the offering would not have been substitutionally slain—"killed before Jehovah"; and lastly, there was the acknowledgment that because no unreserved devotedness had been found in him, he needed an offering to be wholly given in his stead as "a sweet savour of rest before Jehovah." The burnt-offering therefore may be regarded as the type of Christ in respect of that full, unreserved devotedness of service which caused Him, as the servant of Jehovah, in all things to renounce Himself, and to render every energy, and every feeling, and finally His life itself, as a whole burnt-offering unto God. (B. W. Newton.)

Right use of the grace of the burnt-offering:—To use aright the grace of the burnt-offering requires, whilst we remain in the flesh, continued watchfulness: else we may sit down under the shadow of its mercies and slumber. When protection in the earth was by the especial gift of God granted to Cain, the opportunities which that protection gave were instantly used by him against God. It may be said, what else could be expected from the unregenerate heart of Cain? But it must be remembered that unregenerate energies are still found in the flesh even of the regenerate. "In our flesh no good thing dwelleth," but sin—essential sin—is there. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit." And although the protection vouchsafed to Cain was a temporary mercy only, and although no burnt-offering spread the power of its acceptance over his guilty head, and therefore in him unregeneracy might be expected to work and to bring forth its proper fruits, yet what shall we say of another—him who is first mentioned in Scripture as standing by the side of a burnt-offering altar? Noah offered whole burnt-offerings, and the Lord smelled a sweet savour of rest and made a covenant of blessing, and under it Noah rested: but to what did he devote his energies? To planting a vineyard for himself and cherishing its fruits, till he drank the wine thereof and became drunken and dishonoured. Can there be any other result, when the Church, forgetting its high and separate calling, finds its chief present use of the grace of redemption, in trying to sanctify to itself mere earthly joys? It was otherwise with the Apostle Paul. Who knew, as he, the value of the burnt-offering and the joy of its acceptance? Yet to him, "to live was Christ"; and he laboured on till he could say, "I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith, I have finished my course with joy." And why this difference? It was because the apostle better understood that the only true place of blessing was "the new creation." His soul followed, as it were, the offering to the place into which its sweet savour ascended—even above the heavens. (*Ibid.*)

Inferior offerings permitted:—One offerer might bring a bullock—another an offering from the flock—another only an offering of fowls. There was evidently much mercy in this provision; for if poverty, or even disinclination, prevented an Israelite from bringing the highest offering, he was permitted to bring a lesser, in order that he might not be deprived entirely of the blessings connected with the burnt-offering. Antitypically, there ought to be in believers sufficient enlargement of faith to form a proper conception of Christ as the burnt-offering; but if this be wanting, there may be a more feeble power of faith, not without its value, which is able to apprehend partially. Such a character of faith is likely to be prevalent at an hour of general weakness like the present. The superior worth of the bullock, as contrasted with the lesser offerings, is doubtless the point chiefly to be rested on. But there seems a peculiar suitability in such a type as the bullock, when our minds are directed to Christ as the Servant of Jehovah. If we are to consider the strength, the patience, the submissiveness, which characterised His service, or the value of that service in result, the bullock is evidently a far fitter type than either the sheep or the dove. When the offering was from the flock, and yet more, when it was taken from the fowls, we find, as might be expected, the ceremonies indicating far less distinct and discriminative apprehension of the value of the burnt-offering than in the former case. A distinct recognition of Him and His perfections, to whom the offering was rendered, was most material. Accordingly, in offering the bullock the offerer presented it "at the door of the Tabernacle of congregation before Jehovah," and killed it "before Jehovah." Great prominence is thus given to "Jehovah"; but in this second case there is no such presentation before Jehovah, no laying the hand on the head of the victim, no mention of its being presented for acceptance or for atonement. It was killed also in a different place, not simply "before Jehovah," but "on the side of the altar northward before Jehovah." In the former case the offerer advanced to the door of the Tabernacle of congregation before Jehovah; as if recognising Him, and all His attributes in their totality; but in this second case he slew the victim, not in front

of the altar, or at the altar, but on the side of the altar northward—indicating, apparently, that his attention was directed, not to the manner in which all the attributes of God were recognised by the altar, as it looked eastward and westward, northward and southward; but that it was fixed peculiarly on its relation to Jehovah in some of His attributes. To speak generally the deficiency in this second class of offerings may be described thus: An insufficient apprehension of Him to whom the offering is brought. Insufficient appreciation of the value of the offering itself, both in its life and in its death. Thoughts not sufficiently discriminative as regards the altar, and the qualities that attach to the offering as there burned. Seeing, then, it is the great object of these ceremonies to expand truth, and to give distinctness of apprehension, that object fails of being attained, just in proportion as there is deficiency of apprehension or confusion of thoughts that should be distinguished. This is still more manifest in the offering from the fowls. (*Ibid.*) “*Kill it on the side of the altar northward*”:—One obvious reason seems to be this—there was a necessity, for the sake of order, that there should be a separate place for killing the oxen and the sheep. No quarter of the heavens was sacred; and since, at other times, the sacrifice was presented on the east side, a variety like this answered the purpose of proclaiming that Jesus is offered to any soul in any nation, east or north, *i.e.*, from east to west, north to south; His death is presented to the view of all, to be believed by men as soon as they see it. “Look unto Me and be ye saved, all ends of the earth.” (*A. A. Bonar.*)

The complete offering of self required by God:—Give to God ourselves or nothing; and to give ourselves to Him is not His advantage but ours. The philosopher said to his poor scholar, who told him he had nothing but himself to give: “It is well,” said he; “and I will endeavour to give thee back to thyself better than I received thee.” Thus doth God with us, and a Christian makes himself his daily sacrifice; he renews this gift of himself every day to God, and, receiving it every day bettered again, still he hath the more delight to give it, as being fitter for God the more it is sanctified by former sacrificing. Now that whereby we offer all other spiritual sacrifices, and even ourselves, is love. That is the holy fire that burns up all, sends up our prayers and our hearts and our whole selves, a whole burnt-offering to God. (*Archbp. Leighton.*)

Worthy offerings:—There are some of the heathens that worship the sun for a god, and they would offer to the sun somewhat suitable; and therefore because they did so much admire at the swiftness of the motion of the sun, they would not offer a snail but a flying horse, a horse with wings. Now a horse is one of the swiftest creatures, and one of the strongest to continue in motion for a long time together; then, having added wings to the horse, they conceived he was suitable to be a sacrifice for the sun. So when we come to God to worship Him, to sanctify Him, to call upon His name, we must not bring the bare calves of our lips, but the fervency of our hearts; we must behave ourselves so as to give Him the glory that is fit for such a God to have. (*J. Spencer.*)

The best to be sacrificed:—The Persian metal-workers will use little or no alloy with their gold, professing to despise, as base and beneath the name of gold, the metal alloyed with silver or copper employed by European and American jewellers, even though it be eighteen carats fine. Christ deserves the best of our best. (*Sharpened Arrows.*)

Hearty offerings:—It is said of the Lacedæmonians, who were a poor and homely people, that they offered lean sacrifices to their gods; and that the Athenians who were a wise and wealthy people, offered fat and costly sacrifices; and yet in their wars the former always had the mastery over the latter. Whereupon they went to the oracle to know the reason why those should speed worst who gave most. The oracle returned this answer to them: “That the Lacedæmonians were a people who gave their hearts to their gods, but that the Athenians only gave their gifts to their gods.” Thus the heart without a gift is better than a gift without a heart. But both are desirable. (*T. Secker.*)

The motive in offering:—There may be many things that move, and yet their motion is not an argument of life: a windmill, when the wind serveth, moveth, and moveth very nimbly too, yet this cannot be said to be a living creature; no, it moveth only by an external cause, by an artificial contrivance; it is so framed that when the wind sitteth in such or such a corner it will move, and so, having but an external motor and cause to move, and no inward principle—no soul within it to move it—it is an argument that it is no living creature. So it is also, if a man see another man move, and move very fast in those things which of themselves are the ways of God, you shall see him move as fast to hear a sermon as his neighbour doth, as forward and as hasty to thrust himself and bid himself a guest to the Lord’s table (when

God hath not bid him) as any. Now the question is, What principle sets him at work? If it be an inward principle of life, out of a sincere affection and love to God and His ordinances that carrieth him to this, it argueth that man hath some life of grace; but if it be some wind that bloweth on him, the wind of state, the wind of law, the wind of danger, of penalty, the wind of fashion or custom, to do as his neighbours do : if these, or the like, be the things that draw him thither, this is no argument of life at all ; it is a cheap thing, it is a counterfeit and dead piece of service. (*J. Spencer.*)

Ver. 4. **He shall put his hand upon the head.**—*Putting the hand upon the head of the sacrifice* :—Two matters were essential in the sacrifices of the ceremonial law ; and you have them both in our text : “He shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering,” and “He shall kill the bullock before the Lord.” The appropriation by the offerer and the death of the offering are most fitly joined together, and must neither of them be overlooked. Let us on the present occasion look at THE LEADING ACT OF THE OFFERER : “He shall lay his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering.” All that goes before is important, but this is the real sacrificial act so far as the offerer is concerned. Before he reached this point, the person who presented the offering had to make a selection of the animal to be brought before the Lord. It must be of a certain age, and it must be without blemish ; and for this latter reason a careful examination had to be made ; for the Lord would not accept a sacrifice that was lame, or broken, or bruised, or deficient in any of its parts, or in any way blemished. He required an offering “without spot.” Now I invite all those who seek reconciliation with God to look about them, and consider whether the Lord Jesus Christ be such an atoning sacrifice as they need and as God will accept. After you have well examined His blessed person and His spotless character, if you arrive at the conclusion that He is a fit and acceptable sacrifice for you to present before the Lord, then I long that you may take the much more practical step, and accept the Lord Jesus to be your representative, your sin-offering, your burnt-offering, your substitute, and your sacrifice. Happily you have not to find a sacrifice as the Jew had to supply a bullock ; God has provided Himself with a perfect sacrifice ; that which you have to bring to God, God first brings to you. Happily, there is no need for you to repeat the examination through which the Lord Jesus passed both at the hands of men, and of devils, and of God, when He was tested and tried and examined, and even the prince of this world found nothing of his own in Him. You have to attend to this one thing, namely, the laying of your hands upon the sacrifice provided for you. To the Jew it was a sacrifice to be slain, to you it is a sacrifice already offered ; and this you are to accept and recognise as your own. I pray from my inmost soul that you may immediately do that which was meant by laying the hand upon the victim’s head. What did that mean? 1. It meant four things, and the first was CONFESSION. 1. He that laid his hand upon the head of the offering made confession of sin. Your touch of Jesus must be the touch of one who is consciously guilty. He belongs not to you unless you are a sinner. Confession of sin is no hard duty to some of us, for we can do no other than acknowledge and bemoan our guilt ! Here we stand before Thee self-condemned, and with aching hearts we each one cry, “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness.” Do any of you refuse to make confession of guilt? Then do not think it hard if, since according to your own proud notions you are not sinners, the Lord should provide for you no Saviour ! Should medicine be prepared for those who are not sick? Wherefore should the righteous be invited to partake of pardon? Why should a righteousness be provided for the innocent? Our true place is that of sinners : we plead guilty to the dread indictment of God’s holy law, and therefore we are glad to lay our hand upon the head of the sinner’s Saviour and sacrifice. 2. In this act there was also a confession of self-impotence. Oh, what can we do without Christ? I like what was said by a child in the Sunday School, when the teacher said, “You have been reading that Christ is precious : what does that mean?” The children stayed a little while, till at last one boy replied, “Father said the other day that mother was precious, for ‘whatever should we do without her?’” This is a capital explanation of the word “precious.” You and I can truly say of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is precious to us, for what should we do, what could we do without Him? Because we are so deeply conscious of our own self-impotence we lean hard upon His all-sufficiency. If you could read the text in the Hebrew you would find it runs thus : “He shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-

offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make a cover for him"—to make atonement for him. The word is *cofer* in the Hebrew—a cover. Why, then, do we hide behind the Lord Jesus? Because we feel our need of something to cover us, and to act as an interposition between us and the righteous Judge of all the earth. If the Holy One of Israel shall look upon us as we are He must be displeased; but when He sees us in Christ Jesus He is well pleased for His righteousness' sake. 3. There was a further confession of the desert of punishment. When a man brought his bullock, or his goat, or his lamb, he put his hand on it, and as he knew that the poor creature must die he thus acknowledged that he himself deserved death. II. Secondly, the laying on of hands meant ACCEPTANCE. The offerer by laying his hand upon the victim's head signified that he acknowledged the offering to be for himself. 1. He accepted, first of all, the principle and the plan. Far too many kick against the idea of our being saved by substitution or representation. Why do they rebel against it? Why should I complain of that which is to deliver me from destruction? If the Lord does not object to the way, why should I? God grant that no one may hold out against a method of grace so simple, so sure, so available! But, then, mind. 2. After you have accepted the plan and the way, you must not stop there, but you must go on to accept the sacred person whom God provides. It would have been a very foolish thing if the offerer had stood at the altar and said, "Good Lord, I accept the plan of sacrifice; be it burnt-offering or sin-offering, I agree thereto." He did much more than that; he accepted that very bullock as his offering, and in token thereof placed his hand upon it. I pray you beware of resting satisfied with understanding and approving the plan of salvation. I heard of one who anxiously desired to be the means of the conversion of a young man, and one said to him, "You may go to him, and talk to him, but you will get him no further, for he is exceedingly well acquainted with the plan of salvation." When the friend began to speak with the young man, he received for an answer, "I am much obliged to you, but I do not know that you can tell me much, for I have long known and admired the plan of salvation by the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ." Alas! he was resting in the plan, but he had not believed in the Person. The plan of salvation is most blessed, but it can avail us nothing unless we believe. What is the comfort of a plan of a house if you do not enter the house itself? What is the good of a plan of clothing if you have not a rag to cover you? The offerer laid his hands literally upon the bullock: he found something substantial there, something which he could handle and touch; even so do we lean upon the real and true work of Jesus, the most substantial thing under heaven. We come to the Lord Jesus by faith, and say, "God has provided an atonement here, and I accept it; I believe it to be a fact accomplished on the Cross that sin was put away by Christ, and I rest on Him." Yes; you must get beyond the acceptance of plans and doctrines to a resting in the Divine person and finished work of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, and a casting of yourself entirely upon Him. III. But thirdly, this laying of the hand upon the sacrifice meant not only acceptance, but also TRANSFERENCE. 1. The offerer had confessed his sin, and had accepted the victim then presented to be his sacrifice, and now he mentally realises that his guilt is by Divine appointment to pass over from himself to the sacrifice. Of course this was only done in type and figure at the door of the Tabernacle; but in our case the Lord Jesus Christ as a matter of literal fact has borne the sin of His people. "The Lord hath made to meet on Him the iniquity of us all." "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." But do we by faith pass our sins from ourselves to Christ? I answer, No: in some senses, no. But by faith he that accepts Christ as his Saviour agrees with what the Lord did ages ago, for we read in the book of Isaiah the prophet, "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." 2. The laying of the hand upon the head of the sacrifice meant a transference of guilt to the victim, and, furthermore, a confidence in the efficacy of the sacrifice there and then presented. The believing Jew said, "This bullock represents to me the sacrifice which God has provided, and I rejoice in it because it is the symbol of a sacrifice which does in very deed take away sin." There are a great number of people who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ after a fashion, but it is not in deed and in truth, for they do not believe in the actual pardon of their own sin: they hope that it may one day be forgiven, but they have no confidence that the Lord Jesus has already put away their sin by His death. "I am a great sinner," says one, "therefore I cannot be saved." Man alive, did Christ die for those who are not sinners? What was the need of a Saviour except for sinners? Has Jesus

actually borne sin, or has He not? If He has borne our sin, it is gone; if He has not borne it, our sin will never depart. What does the Scripture say? "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." If, then, Christ did take the sinner's sin, it remains not upon the sinner that believeth. IV. Once more, this laying of the hand upon the head of the victim meant IDENTIFICATION. The worshipper who laid his hand on the bullock said, "Be pleased, O great Lord, to identify me with this bullock, and this bullock with me. There has been a transferring of my sin, now I beseech Thee let me be judged as being in the victim, and represented thereby." Now consider that which happened to the sacrifice. The knife was unsheathed, and the victim was slain. He was not merely bound, but killed; and the man stood there and said, "That is me; that is the fate which I deserve." The poor creature struggled, it wallowed in the sand in its dying agonies, and if the worshipper was a right-minded person, and not a mere formalist, he stood with tears in his eyes, and felt in his heart, "That death is mine." I beseech you when you think of our blessed Lord to identify yourselves with Him. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Nothing but laying the hand on the sacrifice will suffice.*—Now, suppose that the Jew, who went up to the Tabernacle and to the altar, when he came there had been content to talk about the sacrifice without personally placing his hand on it. To talk of it would be a very proper thing to do; but suppose that he had spent all his time in merely discoursing about the plan of a sacrifice, the providing of a substitute, the shedding of blood, the clearance of the sinner through sacrificial death; it would have been a delightful theme, but what would have come of it? Suppose he had talked on and on, and had gone away home without joining in the offering, he would have found no ease to his conscience; he would, in fact, have done nothing by going to the house of the Lord. I am afraid that this is what many of you have done hitherto. You are pleased to hear the gospel, you take pleasure in the doctrine of substitution, and you know true doctrine from the current falsehoods of the hour: for all which I am very glad; but yet you are not saved, because you have not taken Christ to be your own Saviour. You are like persons who should say, "We are hungry; but we admit that bread is a very proper food for men, besides which we know what sort of food makes bone, and what makes muscle, and what makes flesh." They keep on talking all day long about the various qualities of food: do they feel refreshed? No. Is their hunger gone? No. I should suppose that, if they are at all healthy, their appetite is increased, and the more they talk about food the more sharp set they become. Why, some of you here have been talking about the bread of heaven for years, and yet I am afraid you are no more hungry than you used to be. Do go beyond talking about Christ, and learn to feed upon Christ. Come, now, let us have done with talk, and come to deeds of faith. Lay hold on Jesus, who is set before you in the gospel: otherwise, dear friend, I fear you will perish in the midst of plenty, and die unpardoned, with mercy at your gate. Suppose, again, that the Israelite instead of talking with his friends, had thought it wise to consult with one of the priests. "Might I speak with you, sir, a little? Have you a little room somewhere at the back where you could talk with me, and pray with me?" "Yes," says the priest, "what ails you?" "My sin lies heavy upon me." The priest replies, "You know that there is a sacrifice for sin; a sin-offering lieth at the door, and God will accept it at your hands." But you say, "I beg you to explain this matter more fully to me." The priest answers, "I will explain it as well as I can; but the whole of my explanation will end in this one thing—bring a sacrifice, and over its head confess your sin, and let an atonement be made. The sin-offering is what God has ordained, and therefore God will receive it. Attend to His ordinance and live: there is no other way. Fetch your offering; I will kill it for you, and lay it on the altar and present it to God." Do you say to him, "I will call again to-morrow, and have a little more talk with you"? Do you again and again cry, "To-morrow"? Do you go again and again into the inquiry-room? Oh, sir, what will become of you? You will perish in your sin; for God has not appointed salvation by inquiry-rooms and talks with ministers, but by your laying your own hand upon the sacrifice which He has appointed. If you will have Christ, you shall be saved; if you will not have Him, you must perish; all the talking to you in the world cannot help you one jot if you refuse your Saviour. But I see another Israelite, and he stands by his offering, and begins to weep and groan, and bewail himself. I am not sorry to see him weep, for I trust he is sincerely confessing his guilt; but why does he not place his hand on the sacrifice? He cries and he sighs, for he is such a sinner;

but he does not touch the offering. The victim is presented, and in order that it may avail for him, he must lay his hand upon it; but this vital act he neglects and even refuses to perform. "Ah," he says, "I am in such trouble, I am in such deep distress," and he begins starting a difficulty. You hunt that difficulty down, but there he stands, still groaning and moaning, and producing another difficulty, and yet another, world without end. The sacrifice is slain, but he has no part in it, for he has not laid his hand upon it, and he goes away with all the burden of his guilt upon him, though the sacrificial blood has reddened the ground on which he stood. That is what some of you do. You go about lamenting your sin, when your chief lament should be that you have not believed on the Son of God. If you looked to Jesus you might dry your eyes and bid all hopeless sorrows cease; for He gives remission of sins to all penitents. Your tears can never remove your sins; tears, though flowing like a river, can never wash away the stain of guilt. Your faith must lay her hand on the head of the Lord's sacrifice, for there and there only is there hope for the guilty. Observe that the Israelite had to put his hand upon a victim which was not slain as yet, but was killed afterwards. This was to remind him that the Messiah was not yet come; but you have to trust in a Christ who has come, who has lived, who has died, who has finished the work of salvation, who has gone up into the glory, and who ever liveth to make intercession for transgressors. Will you trust Him or will you not? I cannot waste words; I must come to the point. John Bunyan says that one Sunday when he was playing the game of tip-cat on Elstow Green, as he was about to strike the cat with the stick, he seemed to hear a voice saying to him, "Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to heaven, or wilt thou keep thy sins and go to hell?" This morning the voice from heaven sounds forth this question, "Will you trust in Christ and go to heaven, or will you keep apart from Him and go to hell? for thither you must go unless Jesus becomes your Mediator and your atoning sacrifice. Will you have Christ or no? I hear you say, "*But*"—O that I could thrust your "*but*s" aside. Will you have Christ or not? "*Oh, but*"—Nay, your "*but*s" ought to be thrown into limbo; I fear they will be your ruin. Will you trust Christ or not? If your answer is, "I trust Him with all my heart," then you are a saved man. I say not you *shall* be saved; but you are saved. "He that believeth in Him *hath* everlasting life." (*Ibid.*) *He shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering*:—If we want an offering of ours accepted of God, we must show it in some way. If we want a share in that which another offers, we must let that be manifest also. It is not for us to stand off, or to sit upright, while the minister prays, or the choir sings, ourselves having no part in the service of prayer or song. We must in some way put our hand on the head of that offering, and say Amen, or join—feebly and unmelodiously though it may be—in the chorus. If we fail of this, we fail of any share in the offering and in its benefits. The Lord wants us to rest confidently on His provisions of grace for us. He wants us to lean hard on the Substitute offered and accepted in our behalf. We are not able to stand alone. God understands that very well. But we ought to be able to lean on a sure support. That support is provided. Do you rest on it? (*H. C. Trumbull.*) *For the sake of the substitute*:—I was led into the church of Dr. Kirk, at Boston, when some special meetings were going on. I did not know my right hand from my left in spiritual things. While the doctor was preaching I got angry, for I thought he was telling the people all about me, and I thought it was very impudent of him to do so. I determined that I would never enter that church again. However, I was there next Sunday. Then I went to the prayer-meeting, and got behind a pillar, but a kind gentleman came and gave me a seat. On coming out, although it was not cold weather, I pulled my coat-collar up that I might not be recognised. When I began to be anxious and to pray, I would not say "for Jesus' sake." I did not understand it. I said, "It ain't for Jesus' sake; I want it for my own sake." I could not see what "Jesus' sake" had to do with it. I was in Boston the other day, and saw the old settee I used to sleep on. I had a good mind to bring it home as a relic; perhaps I may yet. I went home one night and knelt down by that settee full of trouble, and I cried out, "O God! *for Jesus' sake* take this load off me." In a moment it was gone; and I thank God that then, twenty-five years ago, Jesus became my personal Friend, and He has been my Friend ever since. (*D. L. Moody.*) *Substitution*:—A friend of mine was master in a school of black children in Jamaica. He had made a law that every lie told in school should be punished by seven strokes on the palm with a strap. One day Lottie Paul told a lie, and was called up to receive the seven strokes. Lottie was a poor

little thing, and pain was terrible to her. But the master must enforce his law. So Lottie had to hold out her hand and receive the seven strokes. But her cry of pain when she had received the first went to the master's heart. So he looked to the forms on which the boys were seated, and asked, "Is there any boy will bear the rest of Lottie's punishment?" And as soon as the words were out of his lips up started a bright little fellow called Jim, and said, "Please, sir, I will!" And he rose from his seat, stepped up to the desk, and received, without a cry, the six remaining strokes. What moved this brave boy to bear Lottie's punishment? It was his gentle heart. And it was the vision of a heart gentler still which filled the master's eyes with tears that day, and made him close his books, and bring his scholars round about his desk, and tell them of the Gentle One who long ago bore the punishment of us all. (*Alex. Macleod, D.D.*) *Laying the hand on the victim*:—The offerer indicated thereby both the surrender of his ownership of the victim and the transfer to it of the feelings by which he was influenced in performing this act of dedication to the Lord. From the practice which obtained during the second Temple, we know that the offerer himself laid both his hands between the two horns of the animal whilst alive, and that no proxy could do it. If several offered one sacrifice, each one laid his hand separately on the victim, confessing his sins and saying, "I have sinned, I have committed iniquity, I have transgressed and I have done this and this, but I repent before Thee, and this is my atonement." (*C. D. Ginsburg, LL.D.*) *The substituting sacrifice*:—In dealing with this lesson the teacher may group his illustrations around the substitute, the accepted offering, and the completed sacrifice. During a recent European war a young man was drawn by conscription for the army. He was very unwilling to join, but the law of his country decreed that he must go unless he could find some one to take his place. At last a friend came forward, went to the front in his stead, and was shot down in his first battle. That was substitution; the volunteer died for his friend. In a fog on one of the American coasts the fishermen heard the steam-whistle of an ocean steamer that was coming direct for the rocks. Out some of them went in a fishing-boat, sailed in before the steamer, shouted words of warning to the captain, saved the ship, and were run down and drowned. They gave their lives for the lives of the passengers on the steamship. That is the law of life—life out of death. The life and liberty of a nation are bought in fields of blood and sacrifice. The death of a mother becomes the occasion of the salvation of a hitherto thoughtless son. Even the continued life of individuals is bought by the slaughter of countless cattle. In picturing out the ceremonies described in the lesson, emphasise the substitutionary offering of a perfect victim. Only, in applying the type to Christ, remember that the meaning of His death for us is greater and fuller than that of any type or illustration. If you tender a clipped coin in payment of what you buy, it will be refused; it is not full value. If a man offer to become bail for an accused person, and it is shown that his property cannot cover the amount of bail, his offer is refused. If a college professor were about to take a week's vacation, it is not likely that the offer of an illiterate man to fill his place till he returned, would be accepted. So the sacrifice that redeems a human soul must be perfect and without blemish. The typical perfect burnt-offering pointed to the accepted offering of the perfect antitype Christ. Picture out the scene at the burning of the offering—the sprinkled blood, the parted body, the smoke rising from the burning fat. The wounded man does not realise how dangerous a thing that slight wound in the arm is, till he sees the surgeons standing around, and notes the preparations made for cutting the limb off. So the sinner must have realised what a terrible thing sin was, when he saw the bloody sacrifice and the burning fire. Should our hatred and fear of sin be any less when we look upon the completed sacrifice at Calvary? (*American Sunday School Times.*) *To make atonement for him*.—*Atonement*:—In this word "atonement" we are introduced to one of the key-words of Leviticus, as indeed of the whole Scripture. The Hebrew radical originally means "to cover," and is used once (Gen. vi. 14) in this purely physical sense. But commonly, as here, it means "to cover" in a spiritual sense, that is, to cover the sinful person from the sight of the Holy God, who is "of purer eyes than to behold evil." Hence, it is commonly rendered "to atone," or "to make atonement"; also, "to reconcile," or "to make reconciliation." The thought is this: that between the sinner and the Holy One comes now the guiltless victim; so that the eye of God looks not upon the sinner, but on the offered substitute; and in that the blood of the substituted victim is offered before God for the sinner, atonement is made for sin, and the Most Holy One is satisfied.

And when the believing Israelite should lay his hand with confession of sin upon the appointed victim, it was graciously promised : "It shall be accepted for him," &c. And just so now, whenever any guilty sinner, fearing the deserved wrath of God because of his sin, especially because of his lack of that full consecration which the burnt-sacrifice set forth, lays his hand in faith upon the great Burnt-offering of Calvary, the blessing is the same. For in the light of the Cross, this Old Testament word becomes a sweet New Testament promise : "When thou shalt rest with the hand of faith upon this Lamb of God, He shall be accepted for thee, to make atonement for thee." This is most beautifully expressed in an ancient "Order for the Visitation of the Sick," attributed to Anselm of Canterbury, in which it is written : "The minister shall say to the sick man, Dost thou believe that thou canst not be saved but by the death of Christ? The sick man answereth, Yes. Then let it be said unto him, Go to, then, and whilst thy soul abideth in thee, put all thy confidence in this death alone; place thy trust in no other thing; commit thyself wholly to this death; cover thyself alway with this alone. . . . And if God would judge thee, say, Lord, I place the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and Thy judgment; otherwise I will not contend or enter into judgment with Thee. And if He shall say unto thee that thou art a sinner, say, I place the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and my sins. If He shall say unto thee, that thou hast deserved damnation, say, Lord, I put the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between Thee and all my sins; and I offer His merits for my own, which I should have, and have not." And whosoever of us can thus speak, to him the promise speaks from out the shadows of the tent of meeting : "This Christ, the Lamb of God, the true Burnt-offering, shall be accepted for thee, to make atonement for thee." (*S. H. Kellogg, D.D.*) *The blood of Christ* :—"The sacrifice which Jesus Christ offered for His people was better than any or all offered under the Levitical law; for they all combined in Him. It was a richer sacrifice by far in itself, for in the Levitical sacrifice there was only the principle of brute life; but in Christ's not only human, but holy, and more, it was Heavenly blood, and so much higher in intrinsic value. His was no involuntary sacrifice, no accidental death; for while sentence was pronounced in Pilate's hall yet "it pleased the Lord to bruise Him." His sacrifice of Himself procures a more thorough cleansing, for it is no ritual or ceremonial cleanness, but a purged conscience, and eternally settles the question of sin. It brings the soul at once into freedom to serve God; the cleansed spirit is brought into delightful service for the Redeemer; it sweeps all time in its efficacy, and is yet to have a more glorious consummation; for our High Priest is in the Holy Place just now, but the curtain will be drawn before long, and He shall come with stretched-out hands bearing the print of the nails—coming out to bless His people." (*Arch. Brown.*) *Redeemed by blood* :—Some Africans are terribly bloodthirsty and cruel. A chief, one day, ordered a slave to be killed for a very small offence. An Englishman who overheard the order at once went to the chief and offered him many costly things if he would spare the poor man's life. But the chief turned to him and said : "I don't want ivory, or slaves, or gold; I can go to yonder tribe and capture their stores and villages. I want no favours from the white man. All I want is blood." Then he ordered one of his men to pull the bowstring and discharge an arrow at the heart of the poor slave. The Englishman instinctively threw himself in front and held up his arm, and the next moment the arrow was quivering in the white man's flesh. The black men were astonished. Then, as the Englishman pulled the arrow from his arm, he said to the chief : "Here is blood; I give my blood for this poor slave, and I claim his life." The chief had never seen such love before, and he was completely overcome by it. He gave the slave to the white man, saying : "Yes, white man, you have bought him with your blood, and he shall be yours." In a moment the poor slave threw himself at the feet of his deliverer, and with tears flowing down his face, exclaimed : "Oh, white man, you have bought me with your blood; I will be your slave for ever." The Englishman could never make him take his freedom. Wherever he went the rescued man was beside him, and no drudgery was too hard, no task too hopeless for the grateful slave to do for his deliverer. If the heart of a poor heathen can thus be won by the wound on a stranger's arm shall not we, who are "redeemed by the precious blood of Christ," give our whole lives also to His service? (*S. S. Chronicle.*) *Remission by blood* :—I would earnestly commend this remission by the shedding of blood to those who have not yet believed. Mr. Innis, a great Scotch minister, once visited an infidel who was dying. When he came to him the first time, he said, "Mr. Innis, I am relying on the mercy of God; God is merciful, and

He will never damn a man for ever." When he got worse and was nearer death, Mr. Innis went to him again, and he said, "Oh, Mr. Innis, my hope is gone; for I have been thinking if God be merciful, God is just too; and what if, instead of being merciful to me, He should be just to me? What would then become of me? I must give up my hope in the mere mercy of God; tell me how to be saved!" Mr. Innis told him that Christ had died in the stead of all believers—that God could be just, and yet the justifier through the death of Christ. "Ah!" said he, "Mr. Innis, there is something solid in that; I can rest on that; I cannot rest on anything else." (*C.H. Spurgeon.*) *Sprinkled with the blood of Christ*:—Martin Luther went one day to see a lad who lay dying. Among the questions asked him was this: "What will you take with you to God?" "Everything that is good," was the reply. "How can you, a poor sinner, take anything to God?" asked the great man. "I will take to God in heaven an humble and a contrite heart, sprinkled with the blood of Christ," was the reply of the dying boy. "Go then, dear son, you will be a welcome guest with God," responded Luther.

Ver. 5. **He shall kill the bullock.**—*Slaying the sacrifice*:—I. Concerning the killing and slaying of the offering, our first point is that it was ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL. 1. The pouring out of the blood of the victim was of the very essence of the type. The death of Christ by blood-shedding was absolutely necessary to make Him an acceptable sacrifice for sin. "It behoved Christ to suffer." He could only enter into the presence of God with His own blood. He could not be the grain of wheat which bringeth forth much fruit unless He should die. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." Observe, not the life, not the incarnation, not the resurrection, not the second coming of the Lord Jesus, but His blood, His death, the giving up of His life, is that which cleanseth us from all sin. This is that purging with hyssop whereof David speaks when he laments his sin, and yet looks to be made whiter than snow by the free pardon of his God. This truth is the subject of all true gospel preaching. Do you not know how Paul puts it—"The preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God"; "for," he says, "the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified." It is not Christ in any other position, but Christ as crucified, Christ as made a curse for us up on the tree, that is the first and most prominent fact that we are called to preach among the sons of men. 2. Here let us further consider that death is the result and penalty of sin—"The soul that sinneth it shall die." "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." "The wages of sin is death." It was meet that the Substitute should bear a similar chastisement to that which should have fallen upon the sinner. 3. This death of Christ was absolutely necessary also for the clearing of the troubled conscience. An awakened conscience will never be quieted with anything less than the blood of the Lamb: it rests at the sight of the great Sacrifice, but nowhere else. II. Secondly, we will with great delight meditate upon the fact that the death of Christ is EFFECTUALLY PREVALENT. Other offerings, though duly slain, did nothing thoroughly, did nothing lastingly, did nothing really, by way of expiation; for the Scripture saith, "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins": the true purification is alone found in the death of the Son of God. Why was there such cleansing power in the Redeemer's blood? I answer, for several reasons. 1. First, because of the glory of His person. Only think who He was! He was none other than the "Light of light, very God of very God." 2. Next, consider the perfection of our Lord's character. In Him was no sin, nor tendency to sin. He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." In His character we see every virtue at its best; He is incomparable. If He therefore died, "the just for the unjust," what must be the merit of such a death? 3. Think next of the nature of the death of Christ, and you will be helped to see how effectual it must be. It was not a death by disease or old age, but a death of violence, well symbolised by the killing of the victim at the altar. 4. And then think of the Spirit in which our Lord and Saviour bore all this. Martyrs who have died for the faith have only paid the debt of nature a little before its time, for they must have died sooner or later; but our Lord needed not to have died at all. He said of His life, "No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself." O glorious Christ, there must be infinite merit in such a death as Thine, endured in such a style! 5. And then I bid you to remember once more the covenant character which Christ sustained: for when He was crucified we thus judge that one died for all, and in Him all died. He was not slain as a private individual, but He was put

to death as a representative man. III. That the fact of the necessity for the death of the Lord Jesus is INTENSELY INSTRUCTIVE. 1. Must the victims die? must Jesus bleed? then let us see what is claimed by our righteous God. He claims our life: He claimed of the offering its blood, which is the life thereof: He justly requires of each of us our whole life. Nor is the demand unjust. Did He not make us, and does He not preserve us? Should He not receive homage from the creatures of His hand? 2. Next, must the sacrifice die? then see the evil of sin. It is not such a trifle as certain men imagine. It is a deadly evil, a killing poison. It is a horrible and a grievous thing, and God saith to you, "Oh, do not this abominable thing which I hate." God help you to flee from all iniquity. 3. Next learn the love of God. Behold how He loved you and me! He must punish sin, but He must save us, and so He gives His Son to die in our stead. I shall not go too far if I say that in giving His Son the Lord God gave Himself, for Jesus is one with the Father. Next learn how Christ has made an end of sin. His one offering has perfected for ever the set-apart ones. These are but a few of the great lessons which we may learn from the necessity that the Sacrifice should be slain. IV. And so I shall close by saying that this blessed subject is not only full of instruction, but it is **ENERGETICALLY INSPIRING**. 1. First, this inspires us with the spirit of consecration. When I think that I could not be saved except by the death of Jesus, then I feel that I am not my own, but bought with a price. 2. Next, this truth should create in us a longing after the greatest holiness, for we should say, "Did sin kill my Saviour? Then I will kill sin!" 3. Does not this inspire you with great love for the Lord Jesus? Can you look at His dear wounds, and not be wounded with love for Him? Are not His wounds as mouths which plead with you to yield Him all your hearts? 4. Lastly, do you not think that this solemn truth should inspire us with great zeal for the salvation of others? (C. H. Spurgeon.)

Vers. 6-13. **The priest shall burn all on the altar.**—*The sacrificial burning*:—What was the significance of the burning? It has been often answered that the consumption of the victim by fire symbolised the consuming wrath of Jehovah, utterly destroying the victim which represented the sinful person of the offerer. And, observing that the burning followed the killing and shedding of blood, some have even gone so far as to say that the burning typified the eternal fire of hell! But when we remember that, without doubt, the sacrificial victim in all the Levitical offerings was a type of Christ, we may well agree with one who justly calls this interpretation "hideous." . . . While it is quite true that fire often typifies the wrath of God punishing sin, it is certain that it cannot always symbolise this, not even in the sacrificial ritual. For in the meal-offering (chap. ii.) it is impossible that the thought of expiation should enter, since no life is offered and no blood shed; yet this also is presented to God in fire. We must hold, therefore, that the burning can only mean in the burnt-offering that which alone it can signify in the meal-offering, namely, the ascending of the offering in consecration to God, on the one hand, and, on the other, God's gracious acceptance and appropriation of the offering. This was impressively set forth in the case of the burnt-offering presented when the Tabernacle service was inaugurated; when, we are told (chap. ix. 24), the fire which consumed it came forth from before Jehovah, lighted by no human hand, and was thus a visible representation of God accepting and appropriating the offering to Himself. The symbolism of the burning thus understood, we can now perceive what must have been the special meaning of this sacrifice. As regarded by the believing Israelite of those days, not yet discerning clearly the deeper truth it shadowed forth as to the great Burnt Sacrifice of the future, it must have symbolically taught him that complete consecration unto God is essential to right worship. There were sacrifices having a different special import, in which, while a part was burnt, the offerer might even himself join in eating the remaining part, taking that for his own use. But in the burnt-offering nothing was for himself: all was for God; and in the fire of the altar God took the whole in such a way that the offering for ever passed beyond the offerer's recall. In so far as the offerer entered into this conception, and his inward experience corresponded to this outward rite, it was for him an act of worship. But to the thoughtful worshipper, one would think, it must sometimes have occurred that, after all, it was not himself or his gift that thus ascended in full consecration to God, but a victim appointed by God to represent him in death on the altar. And thus it was that, whether understood or not, the offering in its very nature pointed to a Victim of the future, in whose person and work, as the one only fully consecrated Man, the burnt-offering

should receive its full explication. And this brings us to the question, What aspect of the person and work of our Lord was herein specially typified? It cannot be the resultant fellowship with God, as in the peace-offering; for the sacrificial feast which set this forth was in this case wanting. Neither can it be expiation for sin; for although this is expressly represented here, yet it is not the chief thing. The principal thing in the burnt-offering was the burning, the complete consumption of the victim in the sacrificial fire. Hence what is represented chiefly here, is not so much Christ representing His people in atoning death as Christ representing His people in perfect consecration and entire self-surrender unto God; in a word, in perfect obedience. How much is made of this aspect of our Lord's work in the Gospels! The first words we hear from His lips are to this effect (Luke ii. 49); and after His official work began in the first cleansing of the Temple, this manifestation of His character was such as to remind His disciples that it was written, "The zeal of Thy house shall eat Me up"—phraseology which brings the burnt-offering at once to mind. And His constant testimony concerning Himself, to which His whole life bare witness, was in such words as these: "I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. . . ." And so the burnt-offering teaches us to remember that Christ has not only died for our sins, but also consecrated Himself for us to God in full self-surrender in our behalf. We are therefore to plead not only His atoning death, but also the transcendent merit of His life of full consecration to the Father's will. To this the words three times repeated concerning the burnt-offering (vers. 9, 13, 17) blessedly apply: it is "an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord." That is, this full self-surrender of the holy Son of God unto the Father is exceedingly delightful and acceptable unto God. And for this reason it is for us an ever-prevailing argument for our own acceptance, and for the gracious bestowment for Christ's sake of all that there is in Him for us. Only let us ever remember that we cannot argue, as in the case of the atoning death, that as Christ died that we might not die, so He offered Himself in full consecration unto God, that we might thus be released from this obligation. Here the exact opposite is the truth; for Christ Himself said in His memorable prayer, just before His offering of Himself to death, "For their sakes I sanctify (consecrate) Myself, that they also might be sanctified in truth." And thus is brought before us the thought, that if the sin-offering emphasised the substitutionary death of Christ, whereby He became our righteousness, the burnt-offering as distinctively brings before us Christ as our sanctification, offering Himself without spot, a whole burnt-offering to God. And as by that one life of sinless obedience to the will of the Father He procured our salvation by His merit, so in this respect He has also become our one perfect example of what consecration to God really is. (S. H. Kellogg, D.D.)

The best offering:—Some children lost their Sunday-school teacher by death. The scholars gathered round the open grave, and the little hands dropped in their wreaths of flowers. They talked afterwards about his goodness and his love, and then considered what they should do to keep his memory bright. One little girl said: "Let us keep his grave fresh with flowers," so every Sunday, after school hours, one of the little girls was told off to beg the flowers she could not gather, and lay them on her teacher's grave. Twelve months passed away, and one sultry July morning one of the grave-diggers saw, lying on the grave which had been so tenderly cared for, a little slumbering child of five or six years. He took her in his arms and gently woke her up. "Where am I?" exclaimed the aroused sleeper. Then suddenly recalling why she had come there, she added, "Oh, I know; it was my turn to put the flowers on teacher's grave last night, and I couldn't find anything half good enough. He used to call me his 'little flower,' and I thought I would give myself to him, just to show him how I loved him." In that cemetery there are two graves opposite each other, the one the Sunday-school teacher, and the other that of the little girl, and on her grave are these words, "Little Flower." She gave herself to show how much she loved him. (G. S. Reaney.)

Genuine consecration:—A personal friend asked Wendell Phillips not long before his death, "Mr. Phillips, did you ever consecrate yourself to God?" "Yes," he answered, "when I was a boy, fourteen years of age, in the old church at the north end, I heard Lyman Beecher preach on the theme, 'You belong to God,' and I went home after that service, threw myself on the floor in my room, with locked doors, and prayed, 'O God, I belong to Thee; take what is Thine own. I ask this, that whenever a thing be wrong it may have no power of temptation over me; whenever a thing be right it may take no courage to do it.' From that day to this it has been so. Whenever I have known a thing to be wrong it has held no

temptation. Whenever I have known a thing to be right it has taken no courage to do it." *A devoted life*:—David Brainerd was one of those who might be called God's men. From the first, it was the vision of God's splendour which subdued him; it was for the glory of God that he laboured; his nearness to the blaze of the Divine presence enabled him to kindle a light which will never be extinguished. Hear what he says concerning his experience when first he obtained a foothold in the kingdom, "My soul rejoiced with joy unspeakable to see such a God! such a glorious, Divine Being; and I was inwardly pleased and satisfied that He should be God over all for ever and ever. My soul was so captivated and delighted with the excellency, loveliness, greatness, and other perfections of God, that I was even swallowed up in Him; at least, to that degree that I had no thought, that I remember at first, about my own salvation, and scarcely reflected that there was such a creature as myself." And, again, on his twenty-fourth birthday, "I hardly ever so longed to live to God, and to be altogether devoted to Him, I wanted to wear out my life in His service and for His glory." He wrote a journal, detailing the exercises of his soul, and recounting his experiences amongst the Redskins. Two early volumes of it he destroyed, lest he might be led to glory in anything he had felt or done; the remaining volumes he also desired to demolish when he came to die; but through the influence of Jonathan Edwards, who had caught a glimpse of their contents, and estimated their worth, he was induced to spare them, and even permit them to be published, though they had not been written with such an intention, but in the weary solitudes had been like a friend, to whom he could pour out the secrets of his heart. William Carey, the pioneer of modern missions, read these journals of Brainerd as he sat on the shoemaker's bench, and said to himself, "If God can do such things among the Indians of America, why not among the pagans of India?" He was thus led to offer himself for missionary work just one hundred years ago. Henry Martyn read the book, and received an impulse which sent him to live and die for Christ in Persia. John Wesley, in answering the question, "What can be done to revive the work of God where it is decayed?" said, "Let every preacher read carefully over the life of David Brainerd." McCheyne records, in his journal, that after reading it, he was "more set on missionary enterprise than ever." (*W. Y. Fullerton, "Sword and Trowel."*) *Results of total self-surrender*:—What are the results of total self-surrender to God, as known to universal ethical experience? Peace, spiritual illumination, hatred of sin, admiration of holiness, a strange new sense of the Divine presence, a feeling of union with God, a love of prayer. Even in the sphere which historic Christianity has not reached, there will be, after total self-surrender, as I hold, at least a dim sense of forgiveness, the feeling that one can say "Abba Father"; a new delight in God's works and in His Word; love of man; loss of fear of death; a growing and finally supreme love of the Father, Redeemer, Ruler, Saviour, which has become the soul's all. An evangelist of great experience and wisdom, one of whose anniversaries was lately honoured in this city, has distributed many thousands of cards on which were printed the following evidences of conversion. He speaks from the point of view of exegetical knowledge. I have spoken thus far from the point of view of ethical science, strictly so-called. Let me contrast now with my results, these results of a practical evangelist. These are the signs of conversion which Dr. Earle gives—1. A full surrender of the will to God. 2. The removal of a burden of sin gradually or suddenly. 3. A new love to Christians and to Jesus. 4. A new relish for the Word of God. 5. Pleasure in secret prayer, at least at times. 6. Sin or sinful thoughts will cause pain. 7. Desire and efforts for the salvation of others. 8. A desire to obey Christ in His commands and ordinances. 9. Deep humility and self-abasement. 10. A growing desire to be holy and like Christ. (*Joseph Cook.*)

Vers. 14-17. *Bring his offering of turtledoves.*—*The burnt sacrifice of birds*:—I. We observe, in the first place, THAT WORSHIP AND DEDICATION TO GOD ARE THE GENERAL IDEAS CONNECTED WITH SACRIFICES IN THE SACRED SCRIPTURES, and this is most important to a right understanding of them. His own Divine love induced the Saviour to glorify His humanity through sufferings, that He might be a Saviour for ever to bring His children to Himself; and thus He suffered, as the apostle says, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. He suffered to satisfy His love, not as a punishment to appease the anger of another Divine person. In the sacrifice before us, "it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord. A symbol this of the offering of interior worship from

love, the fire of the soul, on the altar of the heart. II. But secondly, THE OBJECTS OFFERED UP WERE CORRESPONDENCES OF GOOD PRINCIPLES OR POWERS IN THE MIND. The animals used in the sacrifices were lambs, sheep, oxen, goats, turtledoves, and pigeons, and a consideration of the typical character of each will assist us to confirm the truth of our first proposition. The lamb is used in Scripture as the symbol of innocence, and is so expressive of this grace that it is almost a household word for those who are in possession of it. "I send you forth," said our Lord, "as lambs in the midst of wolves." Sheep are the types of the gentle principles of charity, or sympathising brotherly love. The sheep described by the Lord Jesus in Matt. xxv. were those who had fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick and the prisoners, and succoured the strangers. Oxen are the types of the dispositions to duty and obedience. It was the animal chiefly devoted to the plough, and ploughing, in the spiritual sense, means the preparation of the soul to receive the knowledge of heavenly things. The goat, whose delight is in leaping from rock to rock, is the symbol of the disposition to regard the truths of faith with great pleasure, which sometimes degenerates into a love of faith only, and then is strongly condemned by the Lord (Ezek. xxxiv.; Matt. xxv.). Birds, from their soaring power, are the symbols of thoughts. Turtledoves and pigeons are correspondences of those tender thoughts and yearnings after the heavenly life which the soul has in the early part of its regeneration. The cooing of the turtledove was first heard in the groves of Palestine, on the return of spring. Its sweet sound was the sign of the approach of a brighter and warmer season. When the soul, therefore, is coming to a more genial condition, the sweet thoughts of hope and trust that encourage its advance towards the heavenly state and kingdom are like the soft notes of a God-sent turtledove. All these types, then, of good affections and thoughts, as well as the mode of offering up by fire, abundantly confirm the view we have drawn from the Holy Word, that the sacrifices were representative of good things and principles dedicated to the Lord in worship, not of punishment for human sin. May I not ask you if you have no spiritual sacrifice to make? Have not the turtledove, or the young pigeon of heavenward thought, begun to make themselves heard within you? Have you no yearnings after a better land? Have you not felt the aspirations after a fuller conformity to the Lord, after greater purity of heart, and greater usefulness on earth? If you have, follow their leadings, and offer them up to the Lord in love. Let the fire glow on the altar of your heart. Acknowledge that these first yearnings for good are from Him. He will not despise the gift, but bless it, as an offering made by fire, a sweet savour unto the Lord. III. We observe that so far from the idea of sacrifices being regarded as symbolical of punishment by the Divine Being, the truth is, THAT OUTWARD SACRIFICES NEVER WERE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DIVINE COMMAND AT ALL, BUT WERE MERE PERMISSIONS TO SERVE AS TYPES DURING HUMAN DARKNESS AND DEGENERACY. A common idea has been entertained that outward sacrifices are frequently commanded by God, and He originated the Divine arrangement with the Israelites; but this is altogether an error. Sacrifices were prevalent among the nations of the East before God spoke from Sinai at all. Pharaoh told the Hebrews they could sacrifice in his land, before a single law respecting sacrifice was given them (Exod. viii. 25). In the Book of Leviticus, where the laws respecting sacrifices are all expressly given, they do not command sacrifices, they only regulate them. The language is, "If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord," as in chap. i. 2; "If his offering be of the flocks" (ver. 10); "If the burnt sacrifice for the offering of the Lord be of fowls" (ver. 14); and so on through the book, evidently implying no command, but regulation. The Israelitish people, like all their neighbours, had sunk from worshipping God in the heart and mind, with those affections and thoughts to which animals are the figures and correspondences, and were only too ready to offer up animals instead of offering up themselves. God only regulated this disposition to be a shadow of a better worship to come. The graces of the heart are what God requires, not the slaughter of animals (see Jer. vii. 22, 23; 1 Sam. xv. 22; Micah vi. 7, 8). Let us never suppose, then, that any sacrifice will be acceptable to Him, instead of that devotion of all the principles of the soul to do His holy will, which is the inward meaning of all the sacrifices. IV. Lastly, TO ENABLE US TO DO THIS, AND THUS TO RETURN TO THE ORDER OF HEAVEN, AND TO OFFER SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES AGAIN, THE LORD HIMSELF TOOK HUMAN NATURE UPON HIMSELF, AND PURIFIED, PERFECTED, AND GLORIFIED THIS, SO THAT ALL THE SACRIFICES HAVE THEIR HIGHEST FULFILMENT IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST AND THE SUPREME SACRIFICE. Now we have

seen that in relation to man the sacrifices represent the dedication of the several principles of his nature to the Divine will, by the destruction of selfishness in him, and his consequent regeneration. In our blessed Lord this sanctification of His humanity was far higher; it was the making of it Divine, and thus the supreme sacrifice. He had the same principles in His humanity which we have in ours, thus He had the innocence represented by the lamb, the charity of which the sheep is the symbol, the obedience typified by the ox, the desire for faith of which the goat is the emblem, the thought and yearnings for the salvation of the human race represented by the turtledoves and young pigeons. As His humanity was from Jehovah interiorly, being the Son of God, but clothed with infirm coverings from His mother, He needed to sanctify and perfect it by a process precisely similar to that by means of which His children are prepared for heaven. (*J. Bayley, Ph.D.*) *Our Lord's tenderness in dealing with the offerings of the poor*:—"Then he shall bring his offering of turtledoves, or of young pigeons." There is a great deal of tenderness in the Lord's way of dealing with the offerings of the poor among men; but there is a great deal of meanness in man's way of giving poor offerings to the Lord. The Lord says, If the offering is of the herd, let it be of the best; if the offerer is too poor to bring a bullock, let him take a choice offering from his sheep or his goats; if indeed he has neither herd nor flock, let him bring the best he can find from among his fowls or his pigeons, and the willing spirit shall enlarge the small offering in the sight of the Lord. But man says, My cows are all Alderney or Durham stock; I must hold on to them. My sheep are South Down and Cotesworth; they are needed for wool and mutton. Some of my fowls and pigeons are of fancy breed: I don't see how I can let them go. But there is a sickly pigeon, and a chicken with the "pip." They'll do for an offering. And the close-fisted believer goes up smilingly to the sanctuary, and passes in his shabby offering, with a self-gratulatory likening of his gift to the "widow's mites." There is a world of beauty in the Lord's regard for the circumstances and necessities of His children. There is a shameful perversion, by ungrateful men, of God's goodness in His call for offerings according to the means—not according to the meanness—of those who profess to love and serve Him. (*H. C. Trumbull.*)

CHAPTER II.

VERS. 1-16. A meat-offering.—*The meat-offering*:—It is only when we have received Christ in His character of a sacrifice for our sins, that we are in a condition to render ourselves a living sacrifice, so as to be acceptable to God. The meat-offering illustrates the second great step in the process of salvation. I. The Jew, for the substance of his meat-offering, WAS DIRECTED TO BRING FINE FLOUR, or cakes or wafers of fine flour, or fine flour baked on a plate, or fine flour fried in oil, or the firstfruits in advance of the harvest beaten out of full ears dried by the fire. Either wheat or barley would answer; but the requirement reached the very best grain, either whole, as in the case of the firstfruits, or in its very finest and best preparations. Thus are we to offer our very best to the Lord—our bodies and souls, our faculties and attainments—and in the highest perfection to which we can bring them. Holiness is not the mere saying of a few prayers, or the paying of a few weekly visits to the sanctuary, or the giving of a few pennies now and then for the Church or the poor. It is the rendering of fresh grain and fine flour to the Lord, our God and Benefactor. It is the presentation of our entire selves a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service. II. OIL WAS TO BE POURED UPON, OR MINGLED WITH, THE FLOUR OF THE MEAT-OFFERING. This was not common oil, but the oil of unction, or holy oil. It was a material used in consecrating, or setting apart. It refers to the Holy Spirit, and the operations of that Spirit in setting apart whom He pleases. It typifies that "unction of the Holy One," of which John speaks so largely. No offering of ourselves to God, no true sanctification can occur, without the oil of Divine grace, the principle of holiness and sacred power which is poured upon the believer by the Holy Ghost. III. There was FRANKINCENSE to be put on it. This circumstance identifies it at once with the burnt-offering, or holocaust. That burnt-offering represented Christ as the Sacrifice for our sins. The frankincense therefore plays the part here of

representing the mediation and intercession of the Saviour—the grateful fragrance which comes up before God from the altar of burnt sacrifice. Our consecration to God, even with the gracious operations of the Spirit, could not be acceptable, except through Christ, and the sweet intercessorial perfume which arises from His offering in our behalf. IV. IT WAS TO BE KEPT CLEAR OF LEAVEN AND HONEY. Leaven indicates corruption. Its principle is a species of putrefaction. It tends to spoil and decay. We must be honest in these sacred things, and in real earnest, and not deal deceitfully with others or with ourselves. But why keep away honey? Simply because it is a fermenter, a corrupter, and carries in it the principle of putrefaction. And as leaven represents the ugly, offensive, sour elements of depravity, so honey is the emblem of such as are sweet and attractive to the taste—"the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." Sensual indulgences and worldly pleasures, as well as hypocrisy and malice, will corrupt and destroy our best oblations. V. SALT WAS TO BE USED IN IT. What did this mean? Salt is just the opposite of leaven. The one corrupts, the other preserves. The one taints and hastens putrefaction, the other purifies and keeps wholesome. It was the custom in ancient times to ratify and confirm nearly every important bargain or contract by the eating together of the parties. This, of course, required the use of salt as an article invariably present on all such occasions. It thus, or in some other way, came to be regarded as a symbol of agreement and pure abiding friendship. If we are true in presenting ourselves to God, we come into harmony with God. We become His friends, and He our Friend. As we move to Him, He moves to us. As we come to terms with Him, He comes to terms with us. We agree to be His obedient and loving children, and He agrees to be our protecting and loving Father. We give ourselves up to be His people, and He brings Himself down to be our God. But this same salt tells also of a pure, healthful, pervading savour of virtue and grace. It was the principle of savoury purification to the sacrifice; and so the Saviour requires of us to "have salt in ourselves." As every Christian is to be a living sacrifice—an accepted oblation unto God, he must comply with the law of sacrifice, and "be salted with salt"; that is, made savoury and incorruptible by being pervaded with unfaltering principles of righteousness. VI. ITS EUCHARISTIC NATURE. It was not so much a sacrifice as an oblation of praise. Many are the obligations by which we are bound to present ourselves as living sacrifices unto God. Viewed in whatever light, it is our "reasonable service." But of all the great arguments which bind and move us to this surrender to our Maker, none stand out with a prominence so full and commanding as that drawn from "the mercies of God." We were wrapped up with them in our Creator's thought before our life began. They were present, breathing their blessings with our very substance, when we were fashioned into men. Before our appearance in the world, they had been at work preparing many fond affections for our reception, and arranging many a soft cushion to come between this hard earth and our youthful tenderness. They have tempered the seasons for our good, and filled the horn of plenty to make us blessed. Every day is a handful of sunbeams, kindled and cast down by the mercies of God, to gladden the place of our abode, and to light us to the paths of peace. Every night is a pavilion of the same making, set around us to give us rest, whilst God touches His fingers to our eyelids, saying, "Sleep, My children, sleep." (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *The meat-offering; or the Father honoured*:—Whereas in burnt-offering Christ is seen glorifying God in His death, in—I. MEAT-OFFERING (or meal-offering, R.V.), the chief feature is Jesus honouring the Father in His life, each alike a "sweet savour unto the Lord." The Blessed One must live as man before He could die for men; and here we have the perfect character of the sinless, holy "Man Christ Jesus" (Acts x. 38; John ix. 4). See, then, how the holy life and sacrificial death are inseparably connected; how former must culminate in latter. Hence meat-offering is found constantly in conjunction with "burnt" and "peace" offerings (Numb. xv. 3, 4, 9, 11, 24, xxviii. 4, 5, 12, 13, 27, 28, xxix. 6; Lev. vii. 12), but never with sin or trespass-offerings, each of which shadows forth some aspect of the death, and both are "sweet savour" offerings. Observe, too, that while life, not death, is the prominent feature in meat-offering, there is a thought of latter in "memorial" burned upon brazen altar (ver. 2, 9, 16), upon and around which blood had been sprinkled, and on which burnt and peace-offerings were consumed. Hebrew word, *Mincha*, translated meat-offering, signifies gift or present, and what "present" could any offer to the holy God that would be acceptable save His own "unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. ix. 15), Jesus? Component parts of meat-offering were most

significant. 1. Fine flour (vers. 1, 4, 5, 7), well sifted, free from every unevenness, coarseness, or speck; or could not have typified Jesus, who was (1 Pet. i. 19); every grace alike perfect; perfect evenness of character and temperament; every quality perfectly adjusted and evenly balanced; and this from birth, for He was "the Holy One of God." 2. Oil, both mingled with and poured upon (vers. 4-6). Jesus filled with Spirit from birth (Luke i. 35; Matt. i. 20). Spirit filled the human body that veiled Divinity, imbuing the whole nature with His graces; yet was Jesus "anointed" for service on earth (Acts x. 38; Isa. lxi. 1; Luke iv. 18) at His baptism, when Spirit descended and abode upon Him (Luke iii. 22; John i. 33, 34). Given not "by measure," but in sevenfold power (John iii. 34; Isa. xi. 2). 3. Frankincense further illustrates this. It was white and fragrant. White betokens purity, innocence; striking characteristics of the Blessed One (John viii. 46; 1 Pet. ii. 22, 23). His judge could find "no cause of death in Him," and the centurion "glorified God," and pronounced the Crucified One a "righteous man" (Acts xiii. 28; Luke xxiii. 4, 47). Fragrance was what Jesus truly ever shed around, as He spake the words (Cant. v. 13) and did the works of Him that sent Him (Luke iv. 40-44; John xvii. 8, viii. 28, xii. 49, 50, xiv. 10). The name of Jesus "is as ointment poured forth" (Song of Sol. i. 3), and when He dwells within, the heart is filled with sweet fragrance—as was the house at Bethany (John xii. 3)—and He is to that soul, as to the Father, "a savour of rest" (Gen. viii. 21, mar.); and truly the Father could "rest" in the love and devotion of His beloved Son.

II. "MEMORIAL," BURNED UPON THE ALTAR, shows this still more. Fire brings forth more fully the sweetness, and tells of the Father's delight in Jesus, and acceptance of that holy, consecrated life of devotion to His service, laid on His altar. Observe, too, that *all* the frankincense was to be burnt (ver. 2, 16, vi. 15), telling of the special fragrance, intended only for the Father, in whose service He was consumed by zeal (John ii. 17), and whom He "glorified on the earth" (John xvii. 4; xiii. 31). The burning, as before said, seems likewise to point to death, in which the holy life culminated; but no question of judgment because no question of sin, as shown by word used for burning. Still, though judgment is not portrayed in meat-offering, yet is Jesus there seen as "a Man of sorrows . . ." (Isa. liii. 3), and such expressions as "Baken in the oven," "in the frying-pan," "the firstfruits, green ears of corn dried by the fire," "corn beaten out" (vers. 4, 7, 14), surely tell of the grief and sufferings of the Holy One. But the more He was tried, the sweeter the fragrance that ascended, as in all things He showed Himself submissive to His Father's will. Observe further—III. "THE SALT OF THE COVENANT" must not be lacking from the meat-offering (ver. 13). Salt typified both the incorruption and incorruptibility of our Blessed Lord (Psa. xvi. 10; Acts ii. 27). Salt thus betokens perpetuity. Hence the "covenant of salt" (Numb. xviii. 19; 2 Chron. xiii. 5) tells of the enduring character of Jehovah's "everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure" (2 Sam. xxiii. 5-7; Isa. lv. 3). Assured in Jesus—given "for a covenant . . ." (Isa. xlii. 6, xlix. 8), and Himself "the Amen" of God's covenant promises (Luke i. 72; 2 Cor. i. 20; Rev. iii. 14). Again, see "speech, . . . with grace seasoned with salt" (Col. iv. 6), exemplified in Him of whom it is written, "Grace is poured . . ." (Psa. xlv. 2). Truly gracious words proceeded out of His mouth (Luke iv. 22), but ever seasoned with salt, its pungency, its enduring and incorrupting influence. See how He gave right answers to each, so that no man could "entangle Him . . ." (Matt. ii. 15-46). The like is enjoined to His people (Col. iii. 16; Mark ix. 50), whom He calls "the salt of the earth" (Matt. v. 13; see Prov. xii. 18); and while He would have them follow His example in this, as in all else, He Himself—the Unchangeable—preserves them from corrupting influences; He would have them pure (1 Pet. i. 14-16), "filled with the Spirit" (Eph. v. 18), testifying of Jesus, and thus made "unto God a sweet savour of Christ" (2 Cor. ii. 15).

IV. TWO THINGS FORBIDDEN in meat-offering. 1. Leaven. Used in Scripture as type of evil, of false doctrine (Matt. xvi. 6, 12; 1 Cor. v. 6-8); hence strictly forbidden in every Levitical type of our Lord. It also indicates sourness of temper and puffing up, not uncommon in man; but impossible in the perfect, spotless "Man Christ Jesus," "the second Man, the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. xv. 47). 2. Honey. Sweet to taste, but producing sourness afterwards, as sometimes is the case with the words and ways of man; and likewise with Satan's tempting baits, by which he seeks to lure men to their destruction; but as impossible as the characteristics of leaven in the God-man of whom the meat-offering is type. Lastly, an important question arises: Who are—V. PARTAKERS OF THE MEAT-OFFERING? Aaron and sons (vers. 3, 10, vi. 16-18). They represent the

Church; and the "Church of God" is to feast on Jesus, "the Bread of Life"; to feed on His words (John vi. 35, 47-54, 63; Jer. xv. 16); to meditate on details of holy life of Him who was the Father's delight. The "remnant" of the acceptable "memorial" burnt upon the altar of the Lord was given to the priests; that is, all that is not specially appropriated to the Father, who joys in the Son, is bestowed for the sustenance of His people. Further mark, the priests were to feed on the meat-offering "in the holy place" (chap. vi. 16), consecrated to the service of God. How can any feed on Jesus in places devoted to the world? (*Lady Beaujolois Dent*).

The meat-offering.—I. THE MATERIALS. 1. Bread, corn, wheat, or barley (1 Chron. xxi. 23; Ezek. xlv. 13, 15). (1) Fine flour, purged from the bran. The pure estate of Christ, and of all Christians, with their services in Him, being purged, as it were, from the bran of natural corruption. (2) Firstfruits (see 1 Cor. xv. 20). (3) Ground, sifted, baked, fried, beaten, &c. (see Isa. liii. 5; Col. i. 24). Ignatius, when about to suffer martyrdom by being devoured of wild beasts, speaks of his body as the Lord's corn, which must be ground by their teeth, to be prepared for Him. 2. Oil. This signified in general the Spirit of God in His graces and comforts (Isa. lxi. 1), which Spirit Jesus Christ did receive above measure, and from Him all believers do partake of His anointing. There is, and must be, this sacred oil in all our offerings, the influence of the Spirit of God. 3. Frankincense. Signifying the acceptableness unto God of the persons and services of His people, through the mediation and intercession of Jesus Christ. 4. Salt. The perpetuity of the covenant of grace, and the wholesome and savoury carriage and walking of God's people. II. THE ACTIONS TO BE PERFORMED ABOUT IT. 1. It must be brought to the priest. Imports a voluntary act of the offerer, and a making use of Christ for acceptance in all our services and approaches unto God. 2. The priest is to burn the memorial of it upon the altar, before the Lord (see Psa. xx. 3; Acts x. 4). 3. The remnant was Aaron's and his sons'. (1) The communion and participation of Christ by all believers (Rev. i. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 9; John vi. 33). (2) Part of the priests' maintenance. III. THE MEANING. 1. It prefigured and shadowed forth the atonement or expiation of sin by the righteousness of Jesus Christ—both by His sufferings and actings, His active and passive obedience. 2. It signified also the persons of believers, who, through Christ, are sanctified and cleansed to be a pure oblation to God (Isa. lxvi. 20; Phil. ii. 17; 2 Tim. iv. 6). 3. It signified those fruits of grace and good works that believers perform, whether towards God or towards man. (1) Prayer. (2) Praise. (3) Holy Communion. (4) Alms. 4. It shadowed forth the acceptance of our persons and services with the Lord (Phil. iv. 17, 18; Mal. i. 10, 11). IV. THE ADDITIONS FORBIDDEN. 1. Leaven argues corruption. (1) False doctrine (Matt. xvi. 6, 11, 12). (2) Scandalous and wicked practices (1 Cor. v. 6-8). (3) Hypocrisy and secret sins (Luke xii. 1, 2). (4) Promiscuous communion and carnal mixtures in Church society (1 Cor. v. 6). 2. Honey cloy and loads the stomach, and turns to choler and bitterness. (1) God will be worshipped according to His own institution and command. His will is the rule, though we cannot well see the reason of it. We must not follow any invention of our own, though to our carnal thoughts it seem as sweet as honey, though it seem never so decent, never so orderly. (2) Learn that holy temper and equability of spirit, which becometh saints in all the conditions and vicissitudes they pass through. We must take heed of extremes. There must be neither leaven nor honey; neither too much sour nor too much sweet; neither inordinate sorrow nor inordinate pleasures in the meat-offering of the saints. (3) Some apply it to Christ Himself: that there is in Him, our Meat-offering, no such sweetness which turns to loathing, no such pleasure whereof a man can take too much, no such delight as proves bitter in the latter end. V. THE APPURTENANCE OF DRINK-OFFERINGS. 1. Wine, in typical and allegorical Scriptures, sometimes signifies the joys and consolations of the Holy Ghost. 2. We find the saints pouring out their blood in the cause of Christ, compared to a drink-offering (Phil. ii. 27; 2 Tim. iv. 6). And so, in a much higher sense, the blood of Christ is represented by wine in the Holy Communion. 3. It shadowed forth the Lord's acceptance of His people. (*S. Mather*.) *Homage graced with excellencies*.—I. EVERY ELEMENT OF WORTH AND ATTRACTIVENESS SHOULD CONCENTRATE IN OUR WORSHIP AND SERVICE OF GOD. "Fine flour"—"oil"—"frankincense." By all these combined ingredients a total result would be produced which constituted the offering one "of a sweet savour unto the Lord." 1. Solitary graces are not despised by Him we worship. 2. Yet worship should be the outflow of all noble affections and aspirations of the soul. 3. Preparation for such a blending of graces in

worship is our evident duty. II. ADORABLE PRESENTATIONS TO GOD SECURE HIS GRACIOUS APPRECIATION AND LAVISH PRAISE. "Sweet savour." "A thing most holy." 1. No poverty of approval ever repels a fervent worshipper. 2. Offering such excellency of homage, we shall assuredly realise that God is well pleased. III. EXCELLENCIES IN TYPICAL OFFERINGS FORESHADOWED THE BEAUTIES AND WORTHINESS OF JESUS. 1. The quality of the flour bespeaks the intrinsic excellence of Christ. 2. The pouring oil thereon denotes the anointing of the Spirit. 3. The added frankincense tells of the delightfulness of Christ. (*W. H. Jellie.*) *The meat-offering typical of Christ and His people*:—I. CONSIDER THE PRINCIPAL INGREDIENT OF IT. There were two things of which it consisted, one of which was fine flour. This fine flour was of wheat, as is clear from various accounts we have of this offering. 1. This may denote the excellency of Christ: the superior excellency of Him to all others, not only as a Divine person, but as God-man and Mediator; He is preferable to angels and to men. 2. But this meat-offering, being of fine flour, of wheat the choicest of grain, may also denote the purity of Christ: fine flour of wheat being the purest and cleanest of all others. As He is a Divine person, He is a rock and His work is perfect: a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and true is He. As man, His human nature was entirely free from all contagion and corruption of sin: from original taint, as the fine flour of which this meat-offering was, free from all bran, so He was free from the bran of original corruption. Pure and free was He from any iniquity in life: He did none, neither was guile found in His mouth. 3. Moreover, as fine flour of wheat is the principal part of human sustenance, and what strengthens the heart of man, and nourishes him, and is the means of maintaining and supporting life, it may fitly shadow and figure out our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the bread of God, which came down from heaven. The bread of God's preparing, the bread of God's giving, and the bread which God blesses for the nourishment of His people. Thus this meat-offering, as to the substance of it, being of fine flour of wheat, is a very special and particular representation of our Lord Jesus Christ. 4. It may also, with great propriety be applied unto His people, who are represented in Scripture frequently as wheat. These may be signified hereby, because of their peculiar choiceness; being the excellent in the earth, in whom is the delight of the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as of His Divine Father, whom He has chosen from all others, to be His peculiar people. And they being compared to wheat, may denote also their purity. Not as considered in themselves, but in Christ. II. CONSIDER THE THINGS WHICH WERE TO BE MADE USE OF ALONG WITH THIS MEAT-OFFERING; AND THE THINGS WHICH WERE FORBIDDEN TO BE USED IN IT. There were some things to be made use of in it, such as oil, frankincense, and salt. Oil was to be poured upon it, frankincense put thereon, and every oblation was to be seasoned with salt. The oil that was poured upon the meat-offering, or to be mingled with it, may denote, either the grace of God in Christ, or the grace of God communicated to, and bestowed upon His people. Frankincense put upon the meat-offering, may denote either the acceptableness of the Lord Jesus Christ to God and His people, or the acceptableness of His people unto God and to Christ. Salt was another thing that was used in it, which makes food savoury, and preserves from putrefaction, and may denote the savouriness of the Lord Jesus Christ to believers. "Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt?" says Job (Job. vi. 6). Now Christ, as a meat-offering, is to His people savoury food, such as their souls love: pleasing, delightful, comfortable, refreshing, nourishing, and strengthening. Salt is an emblem of perpetuity. Now this may denote the perpetuity of Christ's sacrifice, which always remains; and the perpetuity of Him, as the meat-offering. For He is that meat which endures to everlasting life; and Him has God the Father sealed. And this, as it respects the people of God, may be an emblem of the savour of their life and conversation. There were two things which the Jews were forbidden to use in the meat-offering; the one was leaven, and the other was honey. There was to be no leaven in it. This, as it may respect our Lord Jesus Christ, the Antitype of the meat-offering, may denote His freedom from hypocrisy, and all false doctrines, which were the leaven of the scribes and Pharisees. He is truth itself—the Way, the Truth, and the Life: and the doctrines preached by Him were grace and truth. To apply this to the people of God, as no meat-offering was to be made with leaven, it may denote that they should take heed of communing with profane and scandalous persons. And it may denote that they should be clear of malice and wickedness; they ought to lay aside, as new-born babes, all superfluity and naughtiness. Another thing forbidden in the meat-offering is honey. The reason of this is because it was made use of among the heathens in their offerings, and

the people of God were not to walk in their ordinances, but in the ordinances appointed of the Lord. Besides, honey, like leaven, is of a fermenting nature, and which, when burned, gives an ill smell; and no ill smell was to be in the offering. It was to be, as our text says, "of a sweet savour unto the Lord"; which it could not have been if the honey had been in it. Besides, it is of a cloying nature, it causes a loathing when persons eat too freely of it. Now there is nothing of this to be found in the antitypical Meat-offering, our Lord Jesus Christ. No, the true believer that feeds by faith upon Him, the language of his soul is, "Lord, evermore give us this bread"; let me always feed upon this provision. Moreover, honey may be considered as an emblem of sin, and sinful pleasures; which are as a sweet morsel rolled under the tongue of a wicked man, though it proves the poison of asps within him at last; and so denotes unto us, that such who would feed by faith on Christ ought to relinquish sinful lusts and pleasures. As well it may also further denote that the people of God must not expect their sweets without their bitters. They that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution of one kind or another. So the passover was to be eaten with bitter herbs as the representation of the same thing. III. AS TO THE COMPOSITION THEREOF, AND THE DIFFERENT MANNER OF DRESSING THIS MEAT-OFFERING. It was to be made of fine flour, made of wheat, beaten out of the husk, and ground; it was to be mingled with oil, kneaded, baked in an oven, fried in pans, or parched by the fire. Now all this may be an emblem of the dolorous sorrows and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ. And as it may be applied to the people of God, it may denote not only their separation from others, but the trials and exercises they meet with, which are sometimes called fiery trials. IV. THE USE THAT WAS MADE OF THIS OFFERING. Part of it was burnt as a memorial unto the Lord, either to put the Lord in mind of His loving-kindness to His people, and of His covenant with them, and promises unto them, to which the allusion is (Psa. xx. 3), or to put the offerer in mind of the great sacrifice of Christ, who was to be offered for his sins, and to be a meat-offering to him. And the other part of it was to be eaten by the priests, which shows the care taken by the Lord for the maintenance of the priests, and from whence the apostle argues for the support of the ministers of the gospel (1 Cor. ix. 13, 14). And this may denote that such who are made priests unto God by Christ have a right to feed upon Christ, the meat-offering by faith; who is the altar and meat-offering, which none but such have a right to eat of. V. THE ACCEPTABLENESS OF IT. It is said to be "of a sweet savour unto the Lord," as Christ's sacrifice is said to be (Eph. v. 2). And so His people also, their persons are an offering of a sweet-smelling savour to God, in Christ; being accepted in Him the Beloved, and as are their sacrifices both of prayer and praise. (*John Gill, D.D.*) *The meat-offering*:—The meat-offering (or rather bread-offering, for the word "meat" has changed its meaning since our translation was made) was an accompaniment of the burnt-offering, and therefore must be looked at in its connection with it. It consisted in the offering of fine flour (ver. 1), or bread made of fine flour (vers. 4, 5, 7), with oil and frankincense (ver. 1), and salt (ver. 13). Its symbolic meaning is quite obvious. Just as the burnt-offering symbolised the dedication of the man himself to God, with all his powers and faculties, the bread-offering signified the dedication to God of the fruit of his labours, the produce of his industry. In its fullest sense it symbolised the dedication of his life-energy to God in holy obedience. The close association of bread with life throughout the Scriptures is quite familiar to us, and perhaps our Lord had this offering in mind when He said: "My meat" (bread) "is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work" (John iv. 34). But while in its fullest sense the bread-offering may be understood as symbolising the entire new life which is the result of our dedicating of ourselves to God, its most obvious application is to the dedication of our substance to Him, to whom we have dedicated ourselves. The oil to be poured upon the offering has here its invariable significance of heavenly grace, and the frankincense the devotional spirit in which the offering should be presented. The salt is spoken of as "the salt of the covenant of thy God" (ver. 13); and the caution never to allow it to be lacking seems to guard against the danger of supposing that our gifts to the Lord can find acceptance in any other way than through the provisions of the covenant which He has made with us by sacrifice (Psa. l. 5). The things prohibited are equally suggestive with the things enjoined. They are leaven and honey: leaven, the symbol of corruption, and honey, of a sweetness which was in the Hebrew mind especially associated with fermentation. The disposal of the offering was also significant. Part of it was to be burnt upon the altar "as a memorial" (vers. 2, 6): the rest was set apart for use by the priests

(ver. 3). Inasmuch as the priests in these transactions represented the people, while the altar represented God, the idea of fellowship or sharing is here conveyed, as if to suggest the thought that while all our energies and all our substance should be consecrated to God in the first place, the sum is nevertheless in the issue divided between the more sacred and the more personal uses. In the matter of property, for instance, the true idea is not to give a portion to the Lord and to keep the rest for ourselves, but to give all to God; and then, with His approval, to expend so much on personal use, and set aside so much for consumption on the altar. But while the offering is to be thus divided, the frankincense is to be all burnt upon the altar (ver. 2). The devotional element is for God alone. You have heard, perhaps, of the newspaper writer who, referring to the devotional part of the service in one of the churches in Boston, spoke of his having had the privilege of listening to "the most eloquent prayer that was ever addressed to a Boston audience." We are too apt to forget that our prayers are not for Boston audiences or London audiences, but for the audience of Heaven, for the ear of God. The frankincense was *all* to be burnt upon the altar. (*J. M. Gibson, D.D.*) *The meat-offering* :—First, the meat-offering was one of the offerings commanded by the law of God; it consisted of fine flour, oil, and frankincense. A handful of this flour, with the oil and all the frankincense, was to be burnt by the priest on the altar as an offering to God, the remainder of the flour and oil was to belong to the priest. Afterwards we read of three kinds of meat-offerings, of which the first was baked in an oven, the second in a pan, the third in a frying-pan, which is thought by some expositors not to mean what we call a frying-pan, but a coarse earthen pot in which the poorer sort in the East cook their food. These three kinds of meat-offerings were all of the same materials, but probably different in quantity from one another, as well as in mode of preparation. The meat-offering in the oven was intended as the offering of the rich; that in the pan for the middling class; that in the frying-pan for the poorest sort. God requires an offering from all, both rich and poor, and will accept the offering of the poorest as well as that of the richest. The meat-offering seems to mean the entire giving up of a man, his body and soul, and all he has to God, which follows his believing acceptance of Christ's work and sacrifice. The man looks with faith to Christ's sacrifice (this is the burnt-offering), this sight of Christ crucified fills all his heart with love and gratitude to his kind and loving Saviour, this causes him to give himself and all that he has to God and His service (this is the meat-offering). The fine flour, probably meant the man's self, his property and services. It was not only flour, but fine flour, the best part of the flour, the flour cleansed from bran, dirt, &c. When the believer offers himself to God, he offers that new man which is created in him by the Holy Spirit, and which is most pleasing and precious in God's sight through Christ. The remains of sin in the believer are like the bran, dirt, &c., in the flour; these are cleansed out of and destroyed in the believer by the Spirit, and are not offered to God. The oil in the meat-offering probably denoted the Holy Spirit. He was poured without measure on Christ the Head of the Church, and flows down to the skirts of His clothing, so that the meanest believer shares in this Divine oil which adorns and beautifies the soul. Frankincense was also a part of the meat-offering. Now, frankincense was a type of the prayers of Christ and His intercession, by which the sacrifices and services of believers are offered to, and accepted by the Father. Just as man is delighted with the sweet smell of frankincense, so the Father is most delighted with Christ, and His prayers for believers, which are always sweet smelling and fragrant to Him. The man was to offer the whole quantity of the meat-offering, but the priest was only to take a handful of it for the Lord. The part that God took was to be offered up as a memorial, to teach a man that all he had belonged to God, and that He had a right to take the whole, or any part of it He pleased. All the frankincense was to be taken, since the prayers of Christ are all so precious to the Father that not one of them can be left out by Him from His own peculiar offering. All the remainder that was not offered on the altar became most holy. This teaches us that when once we have offered ourselves to the Lord, everything of ours becomes separated from the world and sin, and set apart to God's service, and though He returns it to us, yet we must remember that it is most holy, and though it may be used by us, yet it must be used as a most holy thing, and not for ungodly or sinful uses. Secondly, let us consider the two things that were forbidden to be used in meat-offerings, and in most sacrifices. They were (1) leaven; and (2) honey. Leaven is a striking figure of decay and corruption. It is often used in Scripture as a figure of sin, which is the corruption and decay of the soul from the original state of righteousness and holiness in which man was

created to a state of ungodliness and wickedness. Any sin, then, wilfully indulged and allowed is the leaven which is positively forbidden to be offered in any of our spiritual sacrifices to God. The second thing forbidden to be offered in the meat-offering was honey. And by honey being forbidden in the sacrifices, we are taught that in all our spiritual sacrifices of praise and prayer and good works and all others, we should carefully avoid seeking the pleasure or gratification of the natural heart, instead of or in addition to God's glory and approval. Thirdly, let us observe what was to be put not only in the meat-offering, but in every Jewish sacrifice—that was salt. Whatever else was wanting, the salt was never to be wanting from any sacrifice made to God. By salt is meant grace in Scripture, and that work of the Spirit in the heart which is a fruit and effect of the grace or undeserved love of the God-head. Just as salt preserves from natural corruption, so the Holy Spirit and His grace preserves from spiritual corruption—that is, the departure of the heart from the love and fear of God. It was not only salt that was to be in the meat-offering and other sacrifices, but the salt of the covenant of thy God. The salt in believers must be the salt of the covenant—the Holy Spirit—not mere human principles of endurance, temperance, philosophy, and virtue. This covenant is the covenant of grace made between the Father and the Son, its object is to give eternal life and blessings to those who are in it, who are all true believers on account of and in consideration of the work of Christ in His life and death. God gives believers the Spirit as the certain mark and sign of the covenant of grace into which He has admitted them through Christ. Lastly, consider the application of this to ourselves. Take heed that there is no leaven, no tolerated, or indulged, or ruling sin in your heart or conduct, or God will abhor and curse your offerings and sacrifices, for the "sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to the Lord" (Prov. xv. 8). Weakness and sins of infirmity there will always be in all your offerings to God; but the blood of Christ will wash out all these if you go to that fountain. But no sin must be wilfully indulged, or suffered to rule in your heart or life; no sin must be inwardly loved and cherished by you. Take heed also that there is nothing of what the law of God condemns as honey in your offerings to God. Many only seek to please themselves, or to get the praise of men in their service or worship of God; but this is the honey God forbids in the sacrifices. Above all, take heed that you have the Holy Spirit. (*C. S. Taylor, M.A.*) *The meat-offering*:—I. IN ITS CONTRAST TO THE OTHER OFFERINGS. Five points here at once present themselves, which bring out what is distinctive in this offering. The apprehension of these will enable us to see the particular relation which Jesus filled for man as Meat-offering. 1. The first point is that the meat-offering was "a sweet savour." In this particular it stands in contrast to the sin-offering, but in exact accordance with the burnt-offering. 2. The second point in which the meat-offering differed from the others is seen in the materials of which it was composed. These were "flour, oil, and frankincense"; there is no giving up of life here. It is in this particular, especially, that the meat-offering differs from the burnt-offering. Life is that which from the beginning God claimed as His part in creation: as an emblem, therefore, it represents what the creature owes to God. Corn, the fruit of the earth, on the other hand, is man's part in creation; as such, it stands the emblem of man's claim, or of what we owe to man. What we owe to God or to man is respectively our duty to either. Thus in the burnt-offering the surrender of life to God represents the fulfilment of man's duty to God; man yielding to God His portion to satisfy all His claim. In the meat-offering the gift of corn and oil represents the fulfilment of man's duty to his neighbour: man in his offering surrendering himself to God, but doing so that he may give to man his portion. Thus the burnt-offering is the perfect fulfilment of the laws of the first table; the meat-offering the perfect fulfilment of the second. Of course, in both cases the offering is but one—that offering is "the body" of Jesus; but that body is seen offered in different aspects: here in the meat-offering as fulfilling man's duty to man. The one case is man satisfying God, giving Him His portion, and receiving testimony that it is acceptable. The other is man satisfying his neighbour, giving man his portion as an offering to the Lord. 3. The meat-offering was "not wholly burnt." In this it differed from the burnt-offering. Christ as performing man's duty to God—that is, the burnt-offering—was wholly the food of God, wholly put upon His altar, wholly consumed by Him. But Christ as performing His duty to man—that is, the meat-offering—is also man's meat, the food of the priests: "The remnant of the meat-offering shall be Aaron's and his sons'; it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the Lord made by fire." Yet even

here He satisfies God. "A handful, the memorial of the offering," is put upon the altar to teach us, that even in fulfilling man's duty to his neighbour, Christ fulfilled it as "an offering unto the Lord." But though God had thus a portion in the meat-offering, it is nevertheless specially the food of man; primarily to be viewed as offered for us to God, but also as given to us, as priests, to feed on. For us, as meat-offering, Jesus fulfilled what was due to man. He did this as our representative, as the substitute of those who trust Him—in this aspect of the offering our souls find peace; here is our acceptance—but this, though securing peace, is but a part of our blessed portion. If Jesus did all this for us, will He not do it to us? As righteous in Him, we still have wants, we need daily food and anointing; and for these as much as for righteousness, we are debtors to His abounding grace. The law is that the priests should be fed at the altar; they may not work for their bread as others. The faithful Israelite is the appointed channel of their subsistence; on his faithfulness, under God, do they depend for their food. Jesus, as the faithful Israelite, will not fail the priests who wait at the altar. Let His priests ("ye are a royal priesthood") be but found where they should be, and His offering will be there to feed them. "He will abundantly bless the provision, He will satisfy His poor with bread." 4. The fourth point I notice in the meat-offering is, that, though intended for, and for the most part consumed by, man, it was, nevertheless, "offered unto the Lord." In the meat-offering the offerer gives himself as man's meat; yet this is yielded as "an offering unto Jehovah." The offering indeed fed the priests; but it was offered, not to them, but to the Lord. The first Adam took for man not only what was given him, but what God had reserved for Himself. The second Adam gave to God not only God's portion, but even of man's part God had the first memorial. Jesus, as man, in satisfying man's claim on Him, did it as "an offering unto the Lord." With us how much even of our graces is offered to man rather than to God. Even in our most devoted service, what a seeking there is, perhaps unconsciously, to be something in the estimation of others: some secret desire, some undetected wish, even by our very service to be greater here. The very gifts of God and the power of His Spirit are sought the better to give us a place in this world. Surely this is one of the reasons why God can trust us with so little, for with His gifts we build up our own name, instead of His name. But how unlike all this to our Master. 5. In the last place, the contrast between the meat-offering and "the offering of firstfruits at Pentecost." The distinction is stated in the twelfth verse—"As for the oblation of the firstfruits, ye shall offer them unto the Lord, but they shall not be burnt on the altar for a sweet savour." The contrast is this—the meat-offering was a sweet savour: the oblation of firstfruits, though very like the meat-offering, was not so. For the key to this we must turn to chap. xiii., where the law respecting "the oblation of firstfruits" is given to us. In that chapter we have a list of the feasts. First in order comes the Passover, on the fourteenth day at even; then the wave-sheaf of firstfruits, on the morrow after the Sabbath; and then, fifty days after, the oblation of the firstfruits on the day of Pentecost. The "sheaf of firstfruits," on the morrow after the Sabbath, might be burnt to the Lord as a sweet savour; but "the oblation of the firstfruits" at Pentecost might not be burnt on the altar. The reason for this distinction is found in the fact that "the sheaf of firstfruits" was unleavened, while "the oblation of firstfruits" at Pentecost was mixed and made with leaven. The typical application of all this is too obvious to need any comment. Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us, and sacrificed on the predetermined day. Then "on the morrow after the Sabbath," the next ensuing Sabbath, that is, on the appointed "first day of the week," Christ "rose from the dead, and became the firstfruits of them that slept." In Him there was no sin, no leaven; He was in Himself a sweet savour to Jehovah. With this offering, therefore, no sin-offering was coupled; it was offered only with a burnt-offering and meat-offering. But fifty days after this, "when the day of Pentecost was fully come," the Church, typified by the leavened oblation of firstfruits, is offered unto the Lord: for we, as well as Jesus, are firstfruits; "we are," says James, "a kind of firstfruits of His creatures." But this offering, having sin in it, being "mixed with leaven," could neither stand the test of the fire of the altar, nor be an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the Lord. Yet it was to be both offered and accepted—"Ye shall offer it, but it shall not be burnt." And why, and how, was this leavened cake accepted? Something was offered "with it," for the sake of which the leavened firstfruits were accepted. They offered with the leavened bread a burnt-offering, a meat-offering, a peace-offering, and a sin-offering; for leaven being found in the oblation of firstfruits, a sin-offering was

needed with it. And the priest waved all together: "the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits for a wave-offering before the Lord." The Church comes with Christ before God; it is offered with all the value of His work attached to it. II. IN ITS DIFFERENT GRADES OR VARIETIES. These are three in number, and represent the different measures of apprehension with which a saint may see Jesus in any of His relations. 1. The first contrast is, that while in the first grade each article of the materials is enumerated, the second describes the offering more generally as "unleavened wafers anointed." The import of this distinction is at once and easily discoverable. How many saints are there, who, in thinking or speaking about Jesus, can fully assert that He is "unleavened," who know and believe He is sinless, while yet they cannot see all His perfectness. But absence of evil, the being without leaven, is a lower thought than the possession of perfect goodness. We can say, "He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth," long before we can tell what was in Him, and the way in which He spent it all for others. 2. A second point of contrast between the different grades of the meat-offering is too remarkable to be omitted. In the first class it is observed that the offerer himself takes the memorial for God out of the offering; in the second, the priest is said to take it; while in the last class—"in the dried ears"—no mention is made who takes it. The difference is obvious and instructive. The one view shows Christ in His person as offerer, the other in His appointed office as the priest. The first, Christ as offerer personally giving to God, is a higher view than Christ offering as priest officially. The latter view loses, at least, one precious object in the precious offering of Jesus; the office is indeed seen, but the person of the Lord quite lost sight of. 3. But there is a third contrast, and one which may be more generally apprehended, between the first class of the meat-offering and the others. In the first class Christ's offering is seen as flour: He is "the fine flour" bruised. In the other classes this particular is almost merged: He is rather bread, either "loaves" or "wafers." The distinction here is very manifest. We may see Jesus as our "bread," or even as God's bread, without entering into the thoughts which are suggested by the emblems of "fine flour" and "frankincense." The perfect absence of all unevenness, and the deep bruising which He endured that He might satisfy us; the precious savour also of the offering, only more fragrant when tried by fire; these are not our first views of Jesus; for as they are the most perfect apprehensions, so are they generally the last. 4. The difference between the first class of the meat-offering and the third is even more striking and manifest; this latter offering giving us a thought of Christ as "firstfruits," the first sheaf of the ripening harvest, rather than the bread already prepared for food, or the fine flour as seen in the first grade. (*A. Jukes.*) *The meat-offering*:—The meat-offering (so called by our translators because the greater part of it was used for food) represents the offerer's person and property, his body and his possessions. The mercies of God constrain him to give up all he has to the Lord. The meat-offering was generally, or rather always, presented along with some animal sacrifice, in order to show the connection between pardon of sin and devotion to the Lord. The moment we are pardoned, all we are, and all we have, becomes the property of Christ. A type that was to represent this dedication of body and property was one that behaved to have no blood therein; for blood is the life or soul which has been already offered. This distinction may have existed as early as the days of Adam. When God instituted animal sacrifice to represent the atonement by death He probably also instituted this other sort; the fact of this latter existing, and its meaning and use being definitely understood, would tend to confirm the exclusive use of animal sacrifice when atonement was to be shown forth. Cain's offering of firstfruits might have been acceptable as a meat-offering, if it had been founded upon the slain lamb, and had followed as a consequence from that sacrifice. This meat-offering was presented daily, along with the morning and evening sacrifice, teaching us to give all we have to the Lord's use, not by irregular impulse on particular exigencies, but daily. But we have still to call attention to the chief application of this type. It shows forth Christ Himself. And indeed this should have been noticed first of all, had it not been for the sake of first establishing the precise point of view in which this type sets forth its object. We are to consider it as representing Christ Himself in all His work of obedience, soul and body. And if it represent Christ, it includes His Church. Christ and His body, the Church, are presented to the Father, and accepted. Christ, and all His possessions in heaven and earth, whether possessions of dominion or possessions in the souls of men and angels, were all presented to,

and accepted by the Father. Let us now examine the chapter in detail. The meat-offering must be of fine flour—the fine wheat of Palestine, not the coarser “meal,” but the fine, boiled and sifted well. It must in all cases be not less than the tenth of an ephah (chap. v. 11); in most cases far more (see Numb. vii. 13). It was taken from the best of their fields, and cleansed from the bran by passing through the sieve. The rich seem to have offered it in the shape of pure fine flour, white as snow, heaping it up probably, as in Numb. vii. 13, on a silver charger, or in a silver bowl, in princely manner. It thus formed a type, beautiful and pleasant to the eye, of the man’s self and substance dedicated to God, when now made pure by the blood of sacrifice that had removed his sin. For if forgiven, then a blessing rested upon his basket and his store, on the fruit of his body, and the fruit of his ground, the fruit of his cattle, and the increase of his kine (see Deut. xxviii. 3–6). Even as Jesus, when raised from the tomb, was henceforth no more under the curse of sin; but was blessed in body, for His body was no longer weary or feeble; and blessed in company, for no longer was He numbered among transgressors; and blessed in all His inheritance, for “all power was given Him in heaven and in earth.” The oil poured on the fine flour denoted setting apart. It was oil that was used by Jacob at Bethel in setting apart his stone pillow to commemorate his vision; and every priest and king was thus set apart for his office. Oil, used on these occasions, is elsewhere appropriated to mean the Spirit’s operation—the Spirit setting apart whom He pleases for any office. The frankincense, fragrant in its smell, denoted the acceptableness of the offering. As a flower or plant—the rose of Sharon or the balm of Gilead—would induce any passing traveller to stoop down over them, and regale himself with their fragrance, so the testimony borne by Christ’s work to the character of Godhead brings the Father to bend over any to whom it is imparted, and to rest over him in His love. The Lord Jesus says to His Church, in Song of Sol. iv. 6, “Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and the hill of frankincense.” This spot must be the Father’s right hand. In like manner, then, it ought to be the holy purpose of believing souls who are looking for Christ, to dwell so entirely amid the Redeemer’s merits, that, like the maidens of King Ahasuerus (Esther ii. 12), they shall be fragrant with the sweet odours, and with these alone, when the bridegroom comes. When Christ presented His human person and all He had, He was, indeed, fragrant to the Father, and the oil of the Spirit was on Him above His fellows (see Isa. lxi. 1; Psa. xlv. 7; Heb. ix. 14). And equally complete in Him is every believer also. Like Jesus, each believer is God’s wheat—His fine flour. (*A. A. Bonar.*) *Christ the true Meat-offering:*—That Christ is the true Meat-offering is manifest from its materials. These clearly represent features of character found nowhere else but in Him. In the bruising of the corn necessary to the formation of the flour—the baking of the cakes or wafers in the second division of the offering—the scorching of the green ears of corn in the oblation of the firstfruits—in each of these particulars we have a type of His sufferings, who was “bruised for our iniquities,” and by whose stripes we are healed. For, while the meat-offering chiefly directs our attention to Christ in life, exhibiting a faultlessness of character to be seen in none else, it does not stop short of the Cross. True, no life was taken, it was a bloodless sacrifice. It was, however, burned upon the altar (not the altar of incense, but of burnt-offering), and was usually, and I am inclined to think always—accompanied by an animal sacrifice. Does not this prove how closely in its typical application this offering is connected with those which more especially set forth Christ as making atonement in death? It is, in fact, but another aspect of the great sacrificial work of Christ—a work, to the accomplishment of which the unblemished life of the Saviour was as needful as His death. “Full of grace and truth”; the unction of the Holy Ghost, the oil, was ever, and without measure, upon Him. Every incident in His precious life was redolent with the fragrant frankincense; whilst the healthful savour of the salt impregnated everything He did and said. No corrupting leaven! no mere superficial honey-like sweetness (which in us is often called, or mis-called, “our good nature”) characterised the conduct and conversation of the “Anointed Man.” View Him under what circumstances you will, whether in the society of those by whom He was loved, or surrounded with men who went about to kill Him, He is ever the pure, perpetual Meat-offering. True, while we are in the flesh, neither our conduct nor our gifts can fully answer to the pure, unleavened Meat-offering. God has, however, provided a perfect offering in Jesus to supply our lack, to ascend as a sweet-smelling savour for us. Yet, as we are exhorted to be like Jesus in being

“whole burnt-offerings,” presenting “our bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God,” so must we seek to imitate Him in the purity and perfectness of His walk as our Meat-offering. (*F. H. White.*) *The meat-offering*:—1. Its main material is flour. Earth yields the grain; repeated blows thresh it from the husks; the grinding mill reduces it to powder. This thought glides easily to Christ. He stoops to be poor offspring of poor earth. And then what batterings assail Him! 2. The quality of the flour is distinctly marked. It must be fine. All coarseness must be sifted out. No impure speck may stain it. See the lovely beauties of the Lord. His charms bring comfort to the anxious soul. 3. Oil is added (ver. 3). Emblem of the Spirit's grace. 4. Frankincense is sprinkled on the mass. And is not Christ the incense of delight, in heaven, in earth? The precious merits of His work reg' each attribute of God. He brings full honour to their every claim. He, too, is perfume to His people's hearts. Say, ye who know Christ Jesus, is not His name “as ointment poured forth”? 5. No leaven and no honey may be brought. The first is quick to change and taint the meal. It rapidly pervades. It casts a savour into every part. Hence it is evil's emblem. For sin admitted will run wildly through the heart. Its course pollutes. The latter is most luscious to the palate. But is it harmless? Nay, it soon proves a sickening and fermenting pest. Its sweetness tempts. But bitterness ensues. Here is a symbol of sin's flattering bait. 6. But salt must be infused. Its properties repel corruption and defy decay. Where it is sprinkled freshness lives. At its approach time drops its spoiling hand. Again behold the Lord. His essence and His work are purity's bright blaze. 7. The use of the meat-offering. A part is cast upon the altar's hearth. The fire enwraps it in devouring folds. It is the prey of the consuming blaze. The burning meal exhibits Jesus in the furnace of keen anguish. What awe, what peace live in this wondrous sight! The meat-offering had further use. The remnant “shall be Aaron's and his sons’”: it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the Lord made by fire.” Here is another view of Christ. It shows most tender and providing love. The gospel truth is bread of life to hungry souls. They, who serve Christ, sit down at a rich board. A feast is spread to nourish and regale. Christ gives Himself—heaven's richest produce—as substantial food. (*Dean Law.*) *The meat-offering*:—Israel's bodily calling was the cultivation of the ground in the land given him by Jehovah. The fruit of his calling, under the Divine blessing, was corn and wine, his bodily food, which nourished and sustained his bodily life. Israel's spiritual calling was to work in the field of the kingdom of God, in the vineyard of his Lord; this work was Israel's covenant obligation. Of this, the fruit was the spiritual bread, the spiritual nourishment, which should sustain and develop his spiritual life. (*J. H. Kurtz, D.D.*) *The offering of consecrated labour*:—In the meal-offering we are reminded that the fruit of all our spiritual labours is to be offered to the Lord. This reminder might seem unneedful, as indeed it ought to be; but it is not. For it is sadly possible to call Christ “Lord,” and, labouring in His field, do in His name many wonderful works, yet not really unto Him. A minister of the Word may with steady labour drive the ploughshare of the law, and sow continually the undoubted seed of the Word in the Master's field; and the apparent result of his work may be large, and even real, in the conversion of men to God, and a great increase of Christian zeal and activity. And yet it is quite possible that a man do this, and still do it for himself, and not for the Lord: and when success comes, begin to rejoice in his evident skill as a spiritual husbandman, and in the praise of man which this brings him; and so, while thus rejoicing in the fruit of his labours, neglect to bring of this good corn and wine which he has raised for a daily meal-offering in consecration to the Lord. And so, indeed, it may be in every department of religious activity. But the teaching of the meal-offering reaches further than to what we call religious labours. For in that it was appointed that the offering should consist of man's daily food, Israel was reminded that God's claim for full consecration of all our activities covers everything, even to the very food we eat. The New Testament has the same thought (1 Cor. x. 31). And the offering was not to consist of any food which one might choose to bring, but of corn and oil, variously prepared. That was chosen for the offering which all, the richest and the poorest alike, would be sure to have; with the evident intent that no one might be able to plead poverty as an excuse for bringing no meal-offering to the Lord. From the statesman who administers the affairs of an empire to the day-labourer in the shop, or mill, or field, all alike are hereby reminded that the Lord requires that the work of every one shall be brought and offered to Him in holy consecration. And there was a further prescription,

although not mentioned here in so many words. In some offerings barley-meal was ordered, but for this offering the grain presented, whether parched, in the ear, or ground into meal, must be only wheat. The reason for this, and the lesson it teaches, are plain. For wheat in Israel, as still in most lands, was the best and most valued of the grains. Israel must not only offer unto God of the fruit of their labour, but the best result of their labours. Not only so, but when the offering was in the form of meal, cooked or uncooked, the best and finest must be presented. That, in other words, must be offered which represented the most of care and labour in its preparation, or the equivalent of this in purchase price. . . . But, in the selection of the materials, we are pointed toward a deeper symbolism, by the injunction that, in certain cases at least, frankincense should be added to the offering. But this was not of man's food, neither was it, like the meal and cakes and oil, a product of man's labour. Its effect, naturally, was to give a grateful perfume to the sacrifice, that it might be, even in a physical sense, "an odour of a sweet smell." The symbolical meaning of incense, in which the frankincense was a chief ingredient, is very clearly intimated in Scripture (see Psa. cxli. 2; Luke i. 10; Rev. v. 8). The frankincense signified that this offering of the fruit of our labours to the Lord must ever be accompanied by prayer; and further, that our prayers, thus offered in this daily consecration, are most pleasing to the Lord, even as the fragrance of sweet incense unto man. But if the frankincense, in itself, had thus a symbolical meaning, it is not unnatural to infer the same also with regard to other elements of the sacrifice. Nor is it, in view of the nature of the symbols, hard to discover what that should be. For inasmuch as that product of labour is selected for the offering, which is the food by which men live, we are reminded that this is to be the final aspect under which all the fruit of our labours is to be regarded; namely, as furnishing and supplying for the need of the many that which shall be bread to the soul. In the highest sense, indeed, this can only be said of Him who by His work became the Bread of Life for the world, who was at once "the Sower" and "the Corn of Wheat" cast into the ground; and yet, in a lower sense, it is true that the work of feeding the multitudes with the bread of life is the work for us all; and that in all our labours and engagements we are to keep this in mind as our supreme earthly object. And the oil, too, which entered into every form of the meal-offering, has in Scripture a constant and invariable symbolical meaning. It is the uniform symbol of the Holy Spirit of God. Hence, the injunction that the meal of the offering be kneaded with oil, and that, of whatever form the offering be, oil should be poured upon it, is intended to teach us that in all work which shall be offered so as to be acceptable to God, must enter, as an inworking and abiding agent, the life-giving Spirit of God. It is another direction, that into these offerings should never enter leaven. In this prohibition is brought before us the lesson that we take heed to keep out of those works which we present to God for consumption on His altar the leaven of wickedness in every form. In ver. 13 we have a last requisition as to the material of the meal-offering: "season with salt." As leaven is a principle of impermanence and decay, so salt, on the contrary, has the power of conservation from corruption. Accordingly, to this day, among the most diverse peoples, salt is the recognised symbol of incorruption and unchanging perpetuity. Among the Arabs, when a compact or covenant is made between different parties, it is the custom that each eat of salt, which is passed around on the blade of a sword; by which act they regard themselves as bound to be true, each to the other, even at the peril of life. In like manner, in India and other Eastern countries, the usual word for perfidy and breach of faith is, literally, "unfaithfulness to the salt"; and a man will say, "Can you distrust me? Have I not eaten of your salt?" Herein we are taught, then, that by the consecration of our labours to God we recognise the relation between the believer and his Lord, as not occasional and temporary, but eternal and incorruptible. In all our consecration of our works to God, we are to keep this thought in mind: "I am a man with whom God has entered into an everlasting covenant, 'a covenant of salt.'" (*S. H. Kellogg, D.D.*)

The burnt-offering and the meat-offering contrasted:—In ver. 3 we find one of the points of contrast between the burnt-offering and the meat-offering. No part of the burnt-offering was to be eaten. It was called the *Holah* (ascending offering) because it was all made to ascend upon the altar, whereas in the meat-offering all that remained after the burning of that which the priest's hand had grasped, was allowed to be eaten by the priests. The great thoughts connected with these offerings are—first, the satisfaction of the claim of God's holiness by expiatory death; secondly,

the presentation of that which by its perfectness satisfies the claim of God's altar, as it seeks for an offering of sweet savour; thirdly, the provision of something to comfort, feed, and strengthen us. In the two first cases the thought is directed from the altar towards God; in the latter case we are taught to consider that which God from His altar ministers to us. In the burnt-offering the two first of these, viz., expiation and acceptableness, are made the prominent thoughts; but in the meat-offering the second and third, viz., acceptableness and provision of food for us predominate. (*B. W. Newton.*) *The meat-offering*:—As the burnt-offering typifies Christ in death, the meat-offering typifies Him in life. In neither the one nor the other is there a question of sin-bearing. In the burnt-offering we see atonement but no sin-bearing—no imputation of sin—no outpoured wrath on account of sin. How can we know this? Because it was all consumed on the altar. Had there been aught of sin-bearing it would have been consumed outside the camp. But in the meat-offering there was not even a question of bloodshedding. We simply find in it a beautiful type of Christ as He lived and walked and served, down here, on this earth. There are few things in which we exhibit more failure than in maintaining vigorous communion with the perfect manhood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence it is that we suffer so much from vacancy, barrenness, restlessness, and wandering. In the examination of the meat-offering it will give clearness and simplicity to our thoughts to consider, first, the materials of which it was composed; secondly, the various forms in which it was presented; and thirdly, the persons who partook of it. I. AS TO THE MATERIALS, the “fine flour” may be regarded as the basis of the offering; and in it we have a type of Christ's humanity, wherein every perfection met. Every virtue was there, and ready for effectual action, in due season. The “oil,” in the meat-offering, is a type of the Holy Ghost. But inasmuch as the oil is applied in a twofold way, so we have the Holy Ghost presented in a double aspect, in connection with the incarnation of the Son. The fine flour was “mingled” with oil; and there was oil “poured” upon it. Such was the type; and in the Antitype we see the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, first, “conceived,” and then “anointed,” by the Holy Ghost. When we contemplate the Person and ministry of the Lord Jesus, we see how that, in every scene and circumstance, He acted by the direct power of the Holy Ghost. Having taken His place as man, down here, He showed that man should not only live by the Word, but act by the Spirit of God. The next ingredient in the meat-offering demanding our consideration, is “the frankincense.” As has been remarked, the “fine flour” was the basis of the offering. The “oil” and “frankincense” were the two leading adjuncts; and, truly, the connection between these two latter is most instructive. The “oil” typifies the power of Christ's ministry; “the frankincense” typifies the object thereof. The former teaches us that He did everything by the Spirit of God, the latter that He did everything to the glory of God. It now only remains for us to consider an ingredient which was an inseparable adjunct of the meat-offering, namely, “salt.” The expression, “salt of the covenant,” sets forth the enduring character of that covenant. God Himself has so ordained it in all things that nought can ever alter it—no influence can ever corrupt it. In a spiritual and practical point of view, it is impossible to overestimate the value of such an ingredient. Christ's words were not merely words of grace, but words of pungent power—words Divinely adapted to preserve from all taint and corrupting influence. Having thus considered the ingredients which composed the meat-offering, we shall now refer to those which were excluded from it. The first of these was “leaven.” “No meat-offering which ye shall bring unto the Lord, shall be made with leaven.” No exercise can be more truly edifying and refreshing for the renewed mind than to dwell upon the unleavened perfectness of Christ's humanity—to contemplate the life and ministry of One who was, absolutely and essentially, unleavened. But there was another ingredient, as positively excluded from the meat-offering as “leaven,” and that was “honey.” The blessed Lord Jesus knew how to give nature and its relationships their proper place. He knew how much “honey” was “convenient.” He could say to His mother, “Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?” And yet He could say, again, to the beloved disciple, “Behold thy mother.” In other words, nature's claims were never allowed to interfere with the presentation to God of all the energies of Christ's perfect manhood. II. The second point in our theme is THE MODE IN WHICH THE MEAT-OFFERING WAS PREPARED. This was, as we read, by the action of fire. It was “baken in an oven”—“baken in a pan”—or “baken in a frying-pan.” The process of baking suggests the idea of sundering. But inasmuch as the meat-offering is called “a sweet savour”—a

term which is never applied to the sin-offering or trespass-offering—it is evident that there is no thought of suffering for sin—no thought of suffering the wrath of God, on account of sin—no thought of suffering at the hand of infinite Justice, as the sinner's substitute. The plain fact is this, there was nothing either in Christ's humanity or in the nature of His associations which could possibly connect Him with sin or wrath or death. He was "made sin" on the Cross; and there He endured the wrath of God, and there He gave up His life as an all-sufficient atonement for sin; but nothing of this finds a place in the meat-offering. The meat-offering was not a sin-offering, but "a sweet savour" offering. Thus its import is definitely fixed; and, moreover, the intelligent interpretation of it must ever guard, with holy jealousy, the precious truth of Christ's heavenly humanity, and the true nature of His associations. As the righteous Servant of God He suffered in the midst of a scene in which all was contrary to Him; but this was the very opposite of suffering for sin. Again, the Lord Jesus suffered by the power of sympathy; and this character of suffering unfolds to us the deep secrets of His tender heart. Human sorrow and human misery ever touched a chord in that bosom of love. Finally, we have to consider Christ's sufferings by anticipation. III. THE PERSONS WHO PARTOOK OF THE MEAT-OFFERING. As in the burnt-offering, we observed the sons of Aaron introduced as types of all true believers, not as convicted sinners but as worshipping priests; so, in the meat-offering, we find them feeding upon the remnant of that which has been laid, as it were, on the table of the God of Israel. This was a high and holy privilege. None but priests could enjoy it. Here, then, we are furnished with a beautiful figure of the Church, feeding, "in the Holy Place," in the power of practical holiness, upon the perfections of "the Man Christ Jesus." This is our portion, through the grace of God; but, we must remember, it is to be eaten "with unleavened bread." We cannot feed upon Christ if we are indulging in anything evil. (*C. H. Mackintosh.*) *Self-consecration*:—Consecration is not wrapping one's self in a holy web in the sanctuary, and then coming forth after prayer and twilight meditation, and saying, "There, I am consecrated." Consecration is going out into the world where God Almighty is, and using every power for His glory. It is taking all advantages as trust funds—as confidential debts owed to God. It is simply dedicating one's life, in its whole flow, to God's service. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *We should offer to God what we like best ourselves*:—A reporter thus mentions his visit to a Chinese "Joss-house" in San Francisco. The place where they held their religious services was a chamber in one of their best houses. An intelligent Chinese man, who could speak a little English, was in charge of this room. I asked him why they put tea-cups of wine and tea and rice before their god; did they believe that the god would eat and drink? "Oh, no," he said. "That's not what for. What you like self, you give God. He see, He like see." Too many Christians, instead of giving to God "what they like themselves," offer Him only what they would as lief spare as not. *Labour consecrated to God*:—T. A. Ragland, an eminent mathematician and a devoted Christian, gained the silver cup at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, four years in succession. One of these was dedicated to God for the communion service of a small native Church, mainly gathered by him, in Southern India, and all were set apart for the same purpose in connection with his itinerating missionary service. (*J. Tinling.*) *Offering the best to God*:—An aged minister advised the people of a neighbourhood in Wales, where he laboured for the Master, to hold "cottage prayer-meetings," taking the houses in regular order up the mountain-side. One day a poor woman went to a store and asked for two penny candles. The storekeeper said to her, "Why, Nancy, what do you want with penny candles? Is not the rushlight good enough for you?" Her answer was, "Oh yes, rushlight is good enough for me, but the prayer-meeting will soon be coming to my house, and I want to give the Lord Jesus Christ a good welcome." Is there not a lesson here for each Christian? Are we always ready to "give the Lord Jesus a good welcome"? Or do we keep the candles for self, and give the rushlight to Him? *Offering God the true end of man*:—As we see birds make their nests and breed up their young, beasts make a scuffle for their fodder and pasture, fishes float up and down rivers, trees bear fruit, flowers send forth their sweet odours, herbs their secret virtues, fire with all its might ascending upward, earth not resting till it come into its proper centre, waters floating and posting with their waves upon the neck of one another, till they meet in the bosom of the ocean, and air pushing into every vacuity under heaven. Shall we then think, or can we possibly imagine, that God, the great Creator of heaven and earth, having assigned to everything in the world some particular end, and, as it were, impressed in their nature an appetite

and desire to that end continually, as to the very point and scope of their being; that man (the most noble creature) for whom all things were made, should be made in vain, as not having His peculiar end proportionably appointed to the nobleness of His quality? Yes, doubtless, that God that can never err, nor oversee in His works, hath allotted unto man the worship and service of Himself as the main object and aiming point whereto he ought to lead and refer himself all the days of his life. (*J. Spencer.*) *Oil as a symbol: service permeated by the Holy Spirit*:—Two women used to come to my meetings, and I could tell from the expression of their faces that when I began to preach they were praying for me. At the close of the meetings they would say to me, "We have been praying for you. You need the power." I thought I had power. There were some conversions at the time, and I was in a sense satisfied. I asked them to come and talk with me, and we got down on our knees. They poured out their hearts that I might receive an anointing from the Holy Ghost, and there came a great hunger into my soul. I did not know what it was. The hunger increased. I was crying all the time that God would fill me with His Spirit. Well, one day, I cannot describe it, it is almost too sacred an experience to name, God revealed Himself to me, and I had such an experience of His love that I had to ask Him to stay His hand. I went to preaching again. The sermons were not different. I did not present any new truths, and yet hundreds were converted. (*D. L. Moody.*) *The Holy Ghost needed*:—I was speaking one day with a young minister of the gospel, who told me that on one occasion during his college days he was present when a number of students delivered trial sermons for criticism in the presence of their professor. One very talented young man distinguished himself by the freedom of his delivery and the great eloquence with which he spoke. All present were charmed by the power and beauty of his sermon. As a work of art it was practically faultless. At the conclusion the professor put his hand kindly on the young man's shoulder, solemnly saying to him, "My young friend, your sermon only requires to be baptised by the Holy Ghost." That is just what we all want, in order that we may be able to overcome all temptations, or coldness of heart, and work cordially and continuously for Christ. Happily if we ask the Lord Jesus to send the Comforter, He will come and bless us. (*J. Davidson.*) *Frankincense as a symbol: prayer the true help in service*:—As Michael Angelo says, "The prayers we make will then be sweet indeed, if Thou the Spirit give by which we pray." Our own desires may be hot and vehement, but the desires that run parallel with the Divine will, and are breathed into us by God's own Spirit, are the desires which, in their meek submissiveness, are omnipotent with Him whose omnipotence is perfected in our weakness. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The aroma of the Christian life*:—If one should ask you to explain the odour which fills your room from that beautiful climbing honeysuckle, you could not do it; but you are conscious of the fragrance none the less. Just so there is a quality, a kind of aroma which pervades the personality of certain Christians which is as clearly recognised as the fragrance of the honeysuckle, but which you can as little define or describe.

"When one who holds communion with the skies
Has filled his urn where those pure waters rise
And once more mingles with these meaner things,
'Tis e'en as if an angel shook his wings.
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide
And tells us whence these treasures are supplied."

Attractive fragrance:—As I passed through a glade of trees upon a summer's day I heard the hum of bees. Ah! thought I, there is sweetness near! Presently I smelt the lime, the odour of the flowers which had attracted the bees. They did not stop at the other trees, but made direct for their favourite. What a bright little lesson, Christian, for us! Are we sought after because there is the savour of Christ in us, or are we passed by like the scentless trees? (*From Witherby's Scripture Gleanings.*) *Every Christian's life ought to be fragrant: fragrance more than beauty*:—"I saw," says one, "a bank covered with violets. The sun was shining full upon it, and its genial warmth had opened the flowers, and caused them to exhibit the most beautiful colours. But when I began to gather them, I found, with the exception of very few, that their colour was all they had to recommend them; they were not the sort of violets which afford the sweet fragrance which we expect to find in that flower. It struck me forcibly that this was an emblem of

the Church, the professing Church of Christ. How many are there of fair and promising appearance, professing, and seeming to be of the truth, who yet fail to send up a 'sweet-smelling savour to God'—who are wanting in those holy and devout, and grateful dispositions and affections, which their profession indicates. I bid my heart take the lesson home. What fragrance have I diffused abroad? What incense have I sent upwards? Are not my words and thoughts, is not my whole profession and character, like those scentless violets? There is beauty even in the outward profession of religion and holiness, but if the inward principle be wanting or deficient, there will be no fragrance shed around, no incense wafted upwards. And yet I have been situated, as it were, on a green, sunny bank; my opportunities and means of grace have been many." *Fine enough to be fragrant*:—A company was assembled to see some incense burned; the incense which ascended from the altar morning and evening like the prayers of God's people, "a sweet-smelling savour unto the Lord." A gentleman placed the incense in a mortar and proceeded to grind it. When it was fine he placed some upon the coals which were ready, and all anxiously awaited the perfume which was to be the result. They sat hushed for some minutes, when a murmur of disappointment arose. It was a failure. The gentleman took up the mortar and ground the remainder of the incense to powder; it was exceedingly fine. Then it was placed upon the coals, when immediately the room was filled with the delightful odour. Thus with our prayers; when we get them fine, when we have ground out all the generalities, and simply go to the Lord with every little thing of joy, of sorrow, as we would tell to a friend, never forgetting to thank Him for even the little blessings of life, then our prayers ascend unto heaven as a sweet-smelling savour to a loving and gracious God. (*Surah Smiley.*) *Offerings to God must be simple and sincere*:—In all Buddhist temples a tall and broad-leaved lily stands directly on the front of the altar. Its idea is as beautiful as its workmanship. This pure white emblem suggests that all offerings on God's altar should at once be simple and sincere. And it applies with tenfold force to the service of the Christian sanctuary, and the worship of that God who is a Spirit, and seeketh only such as worship Him in spirit and in truth. *All sin must be excluded from our offerings to God*:—There is no man in his right wits would come as a suitor to his prince, and bring his accuser with him, who is ready to testify and prove to his face his treason and rebellion; much less would any present himself before so great a majesty to make petition for some benefit after he had killed his sovereign's only son and heir, having still in his hand the bloody weapon wherewith he committed that horrid act; there is no adulteress so shamelessly impudent as to desire pardon of her jealous husband having her lover still in her arms, with whom she hath often had wanton dalliance in times past, and is resolved to have the like for the time to come; if any be so mad, so shameless to make suits in this odious manner, they are sure to be repulsed, and find wrath and vengeance where they look for grace and mercy. But thus do they behave themselves towards God, who, remaining polluted with their sins, do offer up their prayers unto Him; for they bring their accusers, even their defiled consciences and crying sins, which continually accuse and condemn them, and call for that due judgment and punishment which they have deserved. (*J. Spencer.*) *Firstfruits of our young years to be consecrated*:—The Jews presented the firstfruits of their ears of corn, early, about Easter; the second was *primitia panum*, the firstfruits of their loaves, and that was somewhat early too, about Whitsuntide; and the third was *primitia frugum*, the fruits of all their latter fruits in general, and that was very late, about the fall of the leaf, in September. In the two first payments, which were offered early, God accepted a part for Himself, but in the third payment, which came late, God would have no part at all. Even so, if we offer the firstfruits of our young years early unto God, He will accept of them as seasonably done; but if we give our best years unto Satan, sacrifice the flower of our youth unto sin, serve the world, and follow after the lusts of our flesh while we are young, and put all the burden of duty upon our weak, feeble, and decrepit old age, give our first years to Satan, and the last unto God, sure it is, that as He then refused such sacrifices under the law, He will not easily receive them now in the time of the gospel. (*Ibid.*) *Self-dedicated*:—It was Christmas morning. The door-bell rang, and two young girls were ushered into the study. One of them was about eight years old, and the other ten. After the usual Christmas salutations, the elder of them said, "We have come to make Christ a Christmas present." "Have you?" I asked. "Well, what are you going to give Him?" "We are going to give Him our hearts," she said. After conversing with them awhile, I

found this was no mere childish freak, but a serious purpose. We then knelt together in prayer, closing with a formal dedication of those young hearts to Him who was God's great Christmas Gift to mankind. From that time those children lived the lives of Christians, and not long after, at the communion-table, they sealed the vow they made that bright Christmas morning. They are faithful Christian women now. (*J. Breed, D.D.*)

The time of offering the firstfruits:—A young lady in a Sabbath School a few mornings since asked her class, "How soon could a child give its heart to God?" One little girl said, "When thirteen years old;" another, "ten;" another, "six." At length the least child in the class spoke: "Just as soon as we know who God is." Could there be a better reply? *Youth the time for religious offering:*—There is one obstacle which affects us in the dedication of our lives to this work, and that is the passing of time. It is very natural that we should think that when we grow older it will be easier to dedicate ourselves to this work. It reminds me of what Holman Hunt, the great artist, said on one occasion when he was congratulated by a friend on his selection to paint the historical frescoes for the House of Commons: "Yes," he said, with sadness, "but I began with my hair grey." It will not be easier for us to wait until our hair is grey. Our opportunities and our strength are greatest in our youth, and it is now that we should make our decision. (*Professor Drummond.*)

Why such varieties of offering?—It speaks in one place of the meat-offering with oil and frankincense; the next place, of flour baked in the oven; in the next place, of green corn. Why this variety? It is just one of those traits which indicate that the God that made creation has inspired the Bible. He is here providing for the poor man as minutely as for the rich. He says, If you are a rich man, and can give a valuable and a costly offering, it is your duty to do so; but if you are a poor man, then offer that offering which agrees with your position; and be sure that the poor man's offering of twenty seeds of corn will be as acceptable to God as the rich man's offering of the finest flour perfumed with costly frankincense, and anointed and consecrated with the most precious oil. It is a beautiful thought of our heavenly Father, that the archangel that is nearest to His throne is not dearer to Him nor more watched by Him than the poorest widow or orphan that weeps and prays, and looks and leans on Him in the streets of this great metropolis. It is one of those traits that come out incidentally in the Bible, indicating the harmony between a God that made the now torn and stained book—the earth—and that inspired the perfect and holy Book—His own gracious Word. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*)

Ver. 13. Season with salt.—*Salt for sacrifice:*—If you will read the chapter through you will note that other things were needed in connection with the sacrifices of the Israelites. Their sacrifices were of course imperfect. Even on the low ground which they occupied as emblems they were not complete; for you read, in the first place, that they needed frankincense; God did not smell sweet savour in the bullock, or the ram, or the lamb, unless sweet spices were added. What does that teach us but that the best performances of our hands must not appear before His throne without the merit of Christ mingled therewith? Another thing that was enjoined constantly was that they should bring oil; and oil is ever the type of the blessed Spirit of God. What is the use of a sermon if there is no unction in it? What is prayer without the anointing that cometh of the Holy Spirit? What is praise unless the Spirit of God be in it to give it life, that it may rise to heaven? That which goes to God must first come from God. Then came a third requisite, namely, salt. If you read the preceding verses you will see that the Lord forbids them to present any honey. "No meat-offering, which ye shall bring unto the Lord, shall be made with leaven: for ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the Lord made by fire. As for the oblation of the firstfruits, ye shall offer them unto the Lord: but they shall not be burnt on the altar for a sweet savour." Ripe fruits were full of honey, full of sweetness; and God does not ask for sweetness, He asks for salt. I. It appears, then, that salt was THE SYMBOL OF THE COVENANT. When God made a covenant with David, it is written, "The Lord gave the kingdom to David for ever by a covenant of salt"—by which was meant that it was an unchangeable, incorruptible covenant, which would endure as salt makes a thing to endure, so that it is not liable to putrefy or corrupt. "The salt of the covenant" signifies that, whenever you and I are bringing any offering to the Lord, we must take care that we remember the covenant. 1. We want this salt of the covenant in all that we do, in the first place, to preserve us from falling into legality. He that serves God for wages forgets the word—"The gift of God is

eternal life." If you forget that you are under a covenant of pure grace, in which God gives to the unworthy, and saves those who have no claim to covenant blessing, you will get on legal ground; and, once on legal ground, God cannot accept your sacrifice. 2. The covenant is to be remembered also that it may excite gratitude. Whenever I think of God entering into covenant that He will not depart from me, and that I shall never depart from Him, my love to Him overflows. Nothing constrains me to such activity and such zeal in the cause of God as a sense of covenant love. Standing on covenant ground we feel consecrated to the noblest ends. 3. This tends to arouse our devotion to God. When we remember that God has entered into covenant with us, then we do not do our work for Him in a cold, dead way; neither do we perform it after a nominal sort; for we say, "I am one of God's covenanted ones." II. But, secondly, salt is THE TOKEN OF COMMUNION. In the East, especially, it is the token of fellowship. When an Oriental has once eaten a man's salt, he will do him no harm. Whenever you are attempting to serve God, take care that you do it in the spirit of fellowship with God. III. But salt is THE EMBLEM OF SINCERITY. "With all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt." There must be an intense sincerity about all we do towards God. IV. Lastly, salt is THE TYPE OF PURIFYING POWER; and with all our sacrifices we have need to bring a great deal of this salt. The salt eats into the meat; it drives away corruption; it preserves it. If we come before God with holy things while we are living in sin we need not deceive ourselves, we shall not be accepted. If there be any man, of whom it can be said that he is a saint abroad and a devil at home, God will estimate him at what he is at home, and not at what he is abroad. He may lay the sacrifice upon the altar, but if it is brought there with foul hands and an unholy heart, God will have nothing to do with it. "Without holiness no man can see the Lord," and, certainly, without holiness can no man serve the Lord. We have our imperfections; but known and wilful sin God's people will not indulge. (C. H. Spurgeon.) "Salt of the covenant":—Eating salt together is in the East a pledge of amity and friendship. Hence the "covenant of salt" was an indissoluble pact; and "salted with the salt of the palace" (Ezra iv. 14) meant not maintenance, but the sign of faithfulness to the king. Salt was used in the sacrifices and offerings of the Israelites, probably with the same idea of honour and fidelity. (G. Deane.) Salt to be included in all offerings:—This salt indicates corruption removed and prevented; and in the case of the meat-offering, it is as if to say, "Thy body and thy substance are become healthy now"; they shall not rot. They are not like those of the ungodly in James v. 2, "Your riches are corrupted." There is a blessing on thy body and thy estate. And next it intimates the friendship (of which salt was a well-known emblem) now existing between God and the man. God can sup with man, and man with God (Rev. iii. 18). There is a covenant between him and God, even in regard to the beasts of the field (Job v. 23), and fowls of heaven (Hos. ii. 13). The friendship of God extends to His people's property; and to assure us of this He appoints the salt in the meat-offering, the offering that especially typified their substance. How comforting to labouring men! how cheering to careworn merchants if they dedicate themselves to God; He is interested in their property as much as they themselves are! "Who is a God like unto Thee!" But more; "with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt," declared that the sweet savour of these sacrifices was not momentary and passing, but enduring and eternal. By this declaration He sprinkles every sacrifice with the salt of His unchanging satisfaction. And "the covenant by sacrifice" (Psa. l. 5) is thus confirmed on the part of God; He declares that He on His part will be faithful. (A. A. Bonar.)

CHAPTER III.

VERS. 1-17. A sacrifice of peace-offering.—*The peace-offering*:—The word peace, in the language of the Scriptures, has a shade of meaning not commonly attached to it in ordinary use. With most persons it signifies a cessation of hostilities, harmonious agreement, tranquillity, the absence of disturbance. But in the Scriptures it means more. Its predominant import there is, prosperity, welfare, joy, happiness. The original Hebrew word includes both these meanings. The old Greek version renders it by terms which signify a sacrificial feast of salvation. We

may, therefore, confidently take the peace-offering as a joyous festival, a solemn sacrificial banqueting, illustrative of the peace and joy which flows to believers from the atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our sanctification through His blood and Spirit. Religion is not a thing of gloom, but of gladness. I. THE PEACE-OFFERING WAS A BLOODY OFFERING. Everything in Christian life, justification and sanctification, the forgiveness of our sins, and the acceptableness of our services, our hopes, and our spiritual festivities, run back into Christ's vicarious sufferings, as their fountain and foundation. This is the centre from which all Christian doctrine, and all Christian experience, radiates, and into which it ultimately resolves itself. Without this, Christianity dwindles down into a cold and powerless morality, with no warming mysteries, no animating sublimities, no melting affections, no transforming potencies. Without this, the soul languishes like a plant excluded from the sunshine, or flourishes only in its own disgrace. If we would have a feast of fat things, the provision must come from the altar of immolation. II. THE PEACE-OFFERING COMES AFTER THE MEAT-OFFERING. We must present the "fine flour" of our best affections, and the fresh firstfruits of uncorrupted obedience, before we can come to feast upon the rich provisions of the altar. We must surrender ourselves to God, and give up to Him in a "covenant of salt" before we can taste of the "peace-offering," or be happy in the Lord. III. The peace-offering was so arranged that the most inward, the most tender, and the most marrowy part of THE SACRIFICE BECAME THE LORD'S PART. The inner fat of the animal, the kidneys, the caul of the liver, and, if a sheep, the great fatty outward appendage, were to be burned on the altar, a sweet savour unto the Lord. God must be remembered in all our joys. Especially when we come to praise and enjoy Him, and to appropriate to our hearts the glad provisions of His mercy, must we come offering to Him the inmost, tenderest, and richest of our soul's attributes. It was thus that Jesus was made a peace-offering for us. And as He devoted every rich thought, every strong emotion, for us, we must now send back the same to Him without stint or tarnish. We may love our friends; but we must love Christ more. We may feel for those united to us in the bonds of domestic life; but we must feel still more for Jesus and His Church. We may be moved with earthly passions; but the profoundest and best of all our emotions must be given to the Lord. The fat, the kidneys, and the most tender and marrowy parts are His. IV. The peace-offerings were sacrifices of gratitude and PRAISE—a species of joyous, thankful banquetings. When the Jew came to make a peace-offering, it was with his heart moved and his thoughts filled with some distinguished mercy. The true Christian has been the subject of wonderful favours. He has had deliverance wrought for him, to which he may ever refer with joyful recollection. He considers the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of that love which thus interposed for his rescue—the mighty woes which the Lord endured for him—the secure ground upon which he now stands in Christ Jesus—and his soul overflows with tremulous gladness. He is melted, and yet is full of delight. He is solemnly joyous. What to say or do he hardly knows. He weeps, and yet exults while he weeps. The whole thing to him becomes a feast of profoundly solemn joy, in which he would gladly have all the world to participate. V. But the feasting of the peace-offering was on SACRED FOOD. The people might have feasts at home, and have other banquets; but they were not peace-offerings. And so the Christian may have feasts and viands apart from the sacred food furnished directly from Christ. There is much virtuous enjoyment in this world of a merely secular sort, from none of which does Christianity exclude us. But all these are mere home-feasts on common viands. The fowl that was eaten in the joyous feast of the peace-offering fell from the altar. It was holy. No defiled person or stranger was allowed to touch it or to partake of it. And so, superadded to the common joys of ordinary life, the Christian has a feast with which the stranger dare not meddle—a feast of fat things, of which the pure only can taste—a banquet of holy food proceeding directly from the altar at which His sacrifice was made. Let us briefly review some of the faithful Christian's peculiar joys. Let us follow him a little into the sources of his consolation, and see of what sort his feast is. 1. First of all is the great and cheering conviction of his heart that there is a God; that the universe is not an orphan, but has a righteous, almighty, and loving Father, who sees all, and provides for all, and takes care of all. 2. The next is the joyous light that shines upon him from God's revelation, relieving his native perplexities, comforting his heart, filling him with pleasant wisdom, and kindling radiance along all his path. Here the riddle of life is explained to him, his duty made plain, and his conscience put to rest. 3. Along

with these are the gifts and graces of a present redemption. 4. And beyond all present experiences, he is authorised to look forward to still higher and greater things in the future. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *The peace-offerings*.—I. THEIR NATURE. They were sacrifices of thanksgiving, whereby the godly testified their gratitude to God for the benefits received from Him. II. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEM AND OTHER SACRIFICES. 1. Generally they were thus distinguished from other sacrifices, which are afterward prescribed (chap. iv. 5), because these were voluntary, the other necessary and commanded; and the peace-offerings were never offered alone, but always joined with other sacrifices, showing that the godly should begin always with giving of thanks. 2. Herein it also differs from the holocaust, which might be of birds; but so were not the peace-offerings, because they were to be divided; so could not the holocaust of birds (chap. i. 17). 3. The holocausts, which were of beasts, were only of the males, but the peace-offerings might be either males or females, because this kind of sacrifice was not so perfect as the other. III. WHY THE PEACE-OFFERINGS WERE CONFINED TO THESE THREE KINDS—OXEN, SHEEP, GOATS. 1. All these were a figure of Christ, who indeed was that Peace-offering whereby God is reconciled to us: the ox resembled His fortitude; the sheep His innocence; the goat, because He took our flesh, like unto sinful flesh. 2. Some apply them to the divers qualities of the offerers: the ox signifying the workers and keepers of the law; the sheep, the simple; the goats, the penitent. 3. But the true reason why these beasts are prescribed only for peace-offerings, not turtledoves or pigeons, as in the burnt-offerings, is because they could not rightly declare their gratitude to God in giving things of no value. IV. WHAT BLEMISHES AND OTHER IMPEDIMENTS WERE TO BE AVOIDED. The impediments which made the beasts unfit for sacrifice were either general in respect of the kind, or particular in regard of the thing offered. 1. For the kind. Some were both unlawful for meat and sacrifice (chap. xi. 3), others for sacrifice but not for meat (Deut. xiv. 4). 2. The particular impediments were either intrinsic in the things themselves, or extrinsic without. (1) The inward defects were such as made them altogether unfit for any kind of sacrifice, as if they were blind, broken, scabbed, &c. (2) The external impediments were such as came by touching any unclean thing. V. WHY THE FAT, AS OF THE BELLY, KIDNEYS, AND LIVER, WAS SET APART FOR SACRIFICE. 1. Generally hereby is signified that all our carnal desires are to be mortified by the fire of the Spirit. 2. More particularly by the fat which covereth the inward parts where the heart is, the seat of anger is insinuated, that we should temper our wrath; and by the kidneys and reins, wherein is the strength of lust, carnal concupiscence; and by the liver the fountain of heat, the gluttonous desire, may be understood all which must be sacrificed unto God. Hereunto, the signification of the Hebrew word here used agreeth; for *chelaioth*, the kidneys, is derived of Calah, desire. 3. And further, because the fat is of its own nature, without sense, and so signifieth the hardness of the heart, which is the cause of unbelief: hereby they were admonished to remove and take away all hardness of heart. VI. WHETHER IT WERE REQUIRED GENERALLY IN ALL SACRIFICES THAT BLOOD SHOULD BE SPRINKLED ON THE ALTAR. As there was difference in the end, use, and manner of sacrifices, for some were only for the honour of God, as the burnt-offerings; some for the benefit of the offerer, either for obtaining of some benefit, or giving thanks for some benefit received, as the peace-offerings, or for expiation of sin, so there was difference in the sprinkling and offering of the blood; yet because in all sacrifices there was some relation unto the expiation of some sin, there was an oblation of blood in all sacrifices, &c.; and so the apostle saith that in the "law without effusion of blood, there was no remission," whereof this reason is given because the life is in the blood, and therefore the Lord gave the blood for the expiation of their souls (chap. xvii. 11), that whereas they themselves had deserved to die for their sins. VII. OF THE MANNER AND ORDER OF THE PEACE-OFFERINGS. 1. The priest killed the beast, sprinkled the blood, flayed it, and took out the inwards. 2. Then he cut the flesh in pieces, and separated the breast and right shoulders with the inwards, and put them into the owner's hands. 3. Then the priest put his hands under the owner's, and waved all before the Lord; if many joined in one oblation, one waved for all, the women waved not, but the priest, unless in the offering of jealousy (Numb. v.), and of a Nazarite (Numb. vi. 4). After he salted the inwards, and laid them on the altar, and the priest had the breast and right shoulder, the owner the rest; but the priest was not to have his part until the Lord were first served and the inwards burnt. VIII. WHAT BECAME OF THE REMAINDER OF THE PEACE-OFFERINGS WHICH WAS NOT BURNT ON THE ALTAR. Though it be not here expressed, yet it may be gathered out of other places that the priests

had part, and the offerer that brought it had his portion also, so then some sacrifices there were of the which nothing remained, as the burnt-offerings. 1. In some other, the part which remained was to be eaten only among the males of the children of Aaron; and they were the sin-offerings (chap. vi. 18). 2. But the heave-offerings and shake-offerings, as the shoulder and breast, were lawful to be eaten, not only by the males and sons of the priests, but by their daughters also (Numb. xviii. 17). 3. But in the peace-offerings there was greater liberty, for of them they which brought the offering might eat (Prov. vii. 14). (*d. Willet, D.D.*) *The peace-offering; or, fellowship with the Father and the Son*:—I. IN THE PEACE-OFFERING we have a beautiful type of the making and bestowing peace, and thereby admitting to “fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ”; one of the most blessed privileges resulting to the Lord’s people from His death. The peace-offering being the central one of the five, as set forth in the opening chapters of Leviticus, seems to tell us that peace was the central object of the Father’s loving purpose when He gave His Son. His desire and design was to give His people peace. We see it as regards Israel of old (chap. xxvi. 6; Numb. vi. 26; 1 Chron. xxii. 9), and no less in the gospel dispensation (Luke ii. 14), for “when we were enemies we were reconciled . . .” (Rom. v. 10). In the burnt-offering His people are seen as accepted worshippers; in the peace-offering both as participating in the personal result to offerer of previous offerings, and feeding on what delights the heart of God, typified by portions consumed by fire on the altar. II. MALE OR FEMALE (chap. iii. 1, 6) were permitted in peace-offering, not male only, as in burnt-offering, which, pertaining to God alone, must be what was esteemed the highest order of offering; while in peace-offering man had a large portion, and this may account for the distinction. Some think the alternative of “male or female” indicates greater or less appreciation, estimation, or enjoyment of Christ by the worshipper; female perhaps implying deeper love, male stronger devotion. Others take it as showing how God, in His grace and love, would give every facility for approaching Him in and through Christ. And again, as the laying on of offerer’s hand (vers. 2, 8, 13) tells of identification of offerer and offering, the thoughts are led to Gal. iii. 28, where we read, “There is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Jesus Christ.” Under the Levitical dispensation the “males” only were to go up at stated periods to worship (Exod. xxiii. 17, xxiv. 23); but the mention of “male or female” in the type before us seems to point onward to this dispensation, in which such distinction no longer exists; for each one, whether “male or female,” who is “justified by faith,” has “peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. v. 1). III. THE BLOOD SPRINKLED by Aaron’s sons, the priests (vers. 2, 8, 13), tells of the worshipper approaching God on the ground of reconciliation made (Rom. v. 11, mar.). Jesus “made peace . . .” (Col. i. 20). God calls His people to peace (1 Cor. vii. 15). He fills with (Rom. xv. 13), and keeps in “perfect peace” the trusting one (Isa. xxvi. 3). Jesus gives peace (John xiv. 27), for He “gave Himself” (Tit. ii. 14); and if we have Christ as “our life” (Col. iii. 4), “He is our Peace” (Eph. ii. 14) likewise; and dwelling in us by His Spirit, peace is “the fruit” (Gal. v. 22). IV. THE LORD’S PORTION is—not the whole, as in burnt-offering, but—the choicest parts. “The fat” with portions of inwards (chap. iii. 3–5, 9–11, 14–16), representing the rich excellences or preciousness of the Lord Jesus (see Psa. xxxvii. 20, mar., same word as Isa. xliii. 4), His truth, purity, wisdom, &c. (Psa. li. 6; John xiv. 6; Job xxxviii. 36; 1 Cor. i. 24). This was typified by the burning on the altar, called “the food of the offering made . . .” (chap. iii. 5, 11, 16). The burnt-offering was “continual” (Exod. xxix. 42; Numb. xxviii. 6); and the peace-offering being burnt upon it tells of virtue of former, possessed by latter. The meat-offering also was offered with peace-offering, the three sweet-savour offerings together, to the full satisfaction of the Father; and giving solid ground for—V. COMMUNION OR FELLOWSHIP, to which God calls those who are “accepted in the Beloved” (1 Cor. i. 9; Eph. i. 6). Fellowship signifies partnership, companionship; and what treasures and blessings does this ensure (Isa. xlv. 3; Col. ii. 3), as portrayed by the portions assigned to priest and offerer, graciously permitted to partake of what delights the Father’s heart! This is the striking feature of peace-offering. “Breast” waved may tell of “risen with Christ” (Col. i. 1); “shoulder” heaved, that He, who is the strength of our life (Psa. xxvii. 1), is on high; breast representing affection, and shoulder strength of Him whose “love is strong . . .” which “many waters cannot quench” (Song of Sol. viii. 6); for He is “everlasting Strength” (Isa. xxvi. 4). “Upon His heart” and “shoulders” Jesus bears His people (as typified in high priest’s dress, Exod. xxviii. 12, 29), now, “in the presence of God” (Heb. ix. 24),

while they feast in His banqueting house under His banner "love" (Song of Sol. ii. 4), and are "strengthened with might by . . ." (Eph. iii. 16). VI. UNLEAVENED CAKES—offered with peace-offering when for a thanksgiving (chap. vii. 12)—tell of holy life of Jesus as inseparably connected with His death, for had He not magnified "the law and . . ." (Isa. xlii. 21), He could not have atoned for the sins of those who had broken it. They tell also of "holiness" needed in offerer (Heb. xii. 14), and for such holiness and "fellowship" there must be abiding and walking "in the light" (John xv. 4, 6; 1 John i. 6, 7, ii. 6). This is further seen in what is said of—VII. LEAVEN AND UNCLEANNES (chap. vii. 13, 20, 21). The "leavened bread" offered "besides the cakes" betokens "sin" in the offerer, never wholly eradicated while life lasts. Our best efforts are tainted by sin (Isa. lxiv. 6), and need the cleansing blood; but though sin is within, it is not to reign or "have dominion" over those "under grace," who, "being justified by faith in the precious blood . . ." (sprinkled in type by priest, chap. iii. 13), are reckoned "dead" to sin, and risen with Christ to "newness of life" (Rom. v. 1, 9, vi. 1, 2, 4-7, 11, 12). (*Lady Beaujolois Dent.*)

The peace-offering:—I. IN ITS CONTRAST TO THE OTHER OFFERINGS, it may be sufficient to enumerate two chief points—1. It was a sweet-savour offering; and—2. The offerer, God, and the priest were fed by it. (1) In the peace-offering the offerer feasts, in other words, finds satisfaction, and feeds upon the same offering of which a part has already satisfied God: for a part of the peace-offering, "the fat, the blood, the inwards," before the offerer can touch his part, must have already been consumed on the altar. I fear that there are but too many saints who never realise this aspect of the offering, and therefore never fully experience that satisfaction which the offering has purchased for them. Thank God, the sufficiency of His work does not depend upon our apprehension of it. But our satisfaction depends much on our apprehension. It is because we apprehend so little that we have so little comfort. And our strength particularly depends on our apprehension of that view of Christ which the peace-offering teaches; for strength is sustained by food, and the peace-offering shows man fed by the sacrifice. Yet how little is this view of Christ apprehended! Am I asked the cause? It is because so few really know acceptance. (2) The offerer feasts with God. Man (in Christ) and God find common food. The offering is shared between them. The thought here is not, as in the burnt-offering, merely that God finds satisfaction in the offering. It includes this, but it goes further. It shows communion; for God and man share together. (3) But further, in the sacrifice of peace-offerings, the offerer feasts with the priest. The sacrificing Priest, as I have already observed, is always Christ, viewed in His official character as Mediator. We learn here how the offering, which He offered as man, feeds, that is, satisfies Him, not only as man, but also as Mediator. To understand this we must recollect and apprehend the varied relations in which Christ stands connected with the offering; for He appears for us in many offices, in more than one relation. In connection with the offering alone we see Him, as I have said, in at least three characters. Now, if this simple distinction be apprehended, it will be manifest that there are things true of Christ in one relation which are by no means true of Him in another. For instance, His intercession for us is as Priest. As the Offering, He does not intercede; as Lamb, He dies for us. So again as Priest and Offerer, He is fed; as the Lamb, as the Offering, He is not fed. Now there are offerings in which the priest finds food, but from participating in which the offerer is excluded: some of the sin-offerings are of this latter character, for in them the priest is fed, while the offerer has nothing. The sin-offerings, as we shall see more fully in the sequel, are man satisfying offended justice. They are not man giving something sweet to God, but man receiving from God in his offering the penalty of sin. These sin-offerings supply food to the priest, that is, Christ as Mediator finds satisfaction in them, but they afford Him no food as man the offerer: as man in them He only confesses sin. The priest, God's official servant, is satisfied, because offended justice is vindicated: but man, who pays the penalty in his offering, finds no satisfaction in the act. (4) But the type takes us further still, and shows us the priest's children also sharing with the offerer in the peace-offering. They, too, as well as the offerer, the priest, and God, find satisfaction in this blessed offering. Our first question here, of course, must be, Who are represented by the priest's children? We have already seen that the Priest is Christ—Christ viewed in His official character as Mediator. His children, that is, His family, are therefore the Church. Just as of old he that really feasted with God in the peace-offering could not do so without sharing with God's priests, so now communion with God, if enjoyed

at all, must be shared with all in communion with Him. There is no question of choice: it cannot be otherwise; for he that is in communion with God must be in communion also with all whom He communes with. II. THE DIFFERENT GRADES OR VARIETIES WHICH ARE OBSERVED IN THIS OFFERING. These show us the different measures of intelligence with which this view of Christ's offering may be apprehended. And here, as there are several distinct sharers in the offering—for God, man, and the priest, have each a portion—it may be well to consider each portion separately with its particular differences, since in each portion there are distinct varieties observed. 1. First, then, as to God's part in the peace-offering. In this certain varieties at once present themselves; some of them relating to the value of the offering, others connected with the offerer's purport in the oblation. (1) To speak first of the varieties touching the value of the offering. We have here, just as in the burnt-offering, several different grades. There is the "bullock," "the lamb," "the goat"; and these respectively represent here what they do in the burnt-offering. Each gives us rather a different thought as to the character of Christ's blessed offering. 2. But there are other varieties noticed in the type, as to that part of the peace-offering which was offered to God, which are connected, not with the value of the offering, but with the offerer's purport in bringing the oblation. If we turn to the seventh chapter, where the distinction I refer to is mentioned, it will be seen that the peace-offering might be offered in two ways. It might be offered either as a thanksgiving, that is for praise, or as a vow or voluntary offering, that is for service. If it were seen to be offered "for thanksgiving," many particulars are noticed respecting man's share in it, which are entirely lost sight of and omitted when it is seen to be offered "for a vow." And most of the varieties in the peace-offering (I may say all the varieties touching the priest's and offerer's part in it) depend upon the view which may be taken of the general character of the offering, whether it were offered "for thanksgiving," or whether it were offered "for a vow." (2) The priest's and offerer's part, and the varieties which are observable here. It will be found that the particulars respecting this portion of the peace-offering differ very much according as the offering is apprehended "for praise" or "for service." (a) In the offering "for praise," a meat-offering is offered of which the offerer as well as the priests partake. The purport of the meat-offering is the fulfilment of the second table of the Decalogue; man offering to God as a sweet savour the perfect accomplishment of his duty towards his neighbour. The peculiarity here is that the offerer partakes of this meat-offering—a thing not permitted in the common meat-offering. The common meat-offering shows us the fulfilment of the law, simply with reference to God, to satisfy Him. But that same fulfilment of the law has other aspects, one of which is, that it satisfies the offerer also. This is the truth brought out in the peace-offering, in which the offerer, as well as God, finds satisfaction in the fulfilment of all righteousness. And this satisfaction is not only in the fulfilment of that part of the law which had reference to God, and which was represented by the offering of a life, but in that part also which referred to man, and was represented by the unleavened cakes of the meat-offering. The latter part of this appears to be quite lost sight of, unless the peace-offering is apprehended as offered "for praise." (b) But further, in the offering "for praise" leavened cakes also are seen to be offered with the sacrifice. Those cakes represent the offering of the Church. When Christ's work is seen merely as "the vow," as a matter of service, the Church's offering does not come into sight: but when His offering is seen "for praise," that is for God's glory, the Church is seen united with Him. 3. One cake out of all the oblation is given to the priest who sprinkles the blood, while the remainder, belongs to him who brings the offering. Christ, as Priest, finds food and satisfaction not only in His own blessed and perfect offering: He feeds also on "the leavened cake"; the offering of His Church, with all its failings, satisfies Him. 4. The last particular noticed respects the period during which the peace-offering was to be eaten. The time for eating the offering "for praise" was "the same day," or "until the morning": in the "vow-offering" there is a little difference; it might be eaten "the same day and on the morrow," or "until the third day." Now the "morning" and the "third day" are sufficiently common types, and are both constantly used, I believe, to denote the resurrection: but I am not so certain as to the different aspect of the resurrection represented by each of them. I am disposed, however, to think that "the morning" represents the resurrection as the time of Christ's appearing, while the thought connected with "the third day" is simply deliverance from the grave. In either case the main truth remains the

same—that the peace-offering is our food until the resurrection: but in the one case we eat as those whose time is short, in the night it may be, but in hope of the morning; in the other the thought of the morning is lost, and instead of it we see days of labour to intervene. I need not say that the first is the higher and happier view. (*A. Jukes.*) *Christ our Peace-offering*:—1. Be persuaded and encouraged to feed and feast upon Christ our Peace-offering. Do not say, Such and such may; if I had such parts and such abilities, and so eminent as such and such, I durst believe. This blessed Peace-offering is not for the priests only, for saints of the highest rank and greatest eminency, but for the common people also. Do but draw near with a pure heart, and then come and welcome. 2. Do not defer the eating of your peace-offerings. Take heed of a procrastinating spirit. 3. Let all your peace-offerings be seasoned with the new leaven of grace and holiness; get this blessed leaven of the kingdom of God into your hearts. 4. Give God the fat, the strength, the vigour of your spirits, the best of your endeavours; do not leave the worst you have to Him, the very dregs of time at night, when you are all sleepy, for prayer and family duties, when you have spent the strength of your time in your callings. 5. Take heed of accounting the blood of the peace-offering a common thing. But, as the typical blood might not be eaten, but was sacred to the Lord, let the blood of Christ be sacred and precious to you. 6. To you that believe, let Christ be precious. There is a reverential esteem of Him in the hearts of all that are His. (*S. Mather.*) *The peace-offering*:—Some anxious soul sighs for felt peace with God. What shall be done? God smooths the way. His voice declares, Let the appeasing victim be now brought. Peace rightly sought shall surely be obtained. Now mark this victim. It may be male or female. It may be taken from larger cattle, or from sheep or goats (chap. iii. 1, 6, 12). There is permission of unwonted breadth. The prince, the peasant, from richest pastures, or bare mountain's brow, may readily obtain the expiating means. But from whatever flock the male or female came, one test must prove it. It must be free from fault. A blameless type proclaims the blameless Lord. God next directs the offerer to touch its head (chap. iii. 2). This act denotes the transfer of all guilt. The burdened thus rolls off his load. The lightened shoulder thus receives relief. The victim is then slain (chap. iii. 2). Here is the wondrous fact, which is the light of types, and rites, and prophecies. Death falls on Christ. He claims the dying place. The slaughtered animal was then divided. The best—the choicest of the parts, were placed on the burning altar. Another portion was the priest's own due. The rest supplied the offerer with food. 1. God claims His share. All which seems rich and precious is first brought to Him. The holy fire reduces it to dust. 2. Provision is then made for those who ministered. The altar-servant never wants. They who leave all for God have all in God. 3. The offerer then takes his part and eats. We see the essence of true faith. It finds soul-sustenance in Jesu's work. (*Dean Law.*) *The best for God*:—1. That in all things we should give thanks unto God. This is all the recompense which God requires for all His benefits. 2. That the best things are to be offered to God. Especially in spiritual duties "the fat" must be offered, that is, the heart and inward affection. Ambrose well says, "Thy affection gives a name to thy work." 3. To abstain from all kinds of cruelty (ver. 17). 4. That all the parts and members of our body should be dedicated to God's service. (*A. Willet, D.D.*) *The peace-offerings*:—These peace-offerings were offered first of all, on the recovery of peace with God in consequence of the expiation. The expiatory offering was first, not the peace-offering: first the atonement, then the calm that results from peace with God through Christ the Atonement. These peace-offerings were also presented as expressive of thanksgiving for mercies, blessings, and benefits that had been received. They were also presented on the performance of a vow that had been made by any of the children of Israel. You will notice another feature in all these offerings—that the offerer might kill the lamb, but the priest of Levi alone might offer it: so Jew and Gentile slew with wicked hands the Lord of glory, but He Himself was the Priest that presented Himself a sacrifice on the altar of Deity, perfect and complete, for the sins of all that believe. Those offerings were also made, I may mention, at the consecration of priests, on the expiry of a Nazarite's vow, at the dedication of the Tabernacle and the Temple, and at the presentation of firstfruits. You will notice that in the Jewish economy everything brought a Jew to the Temple, and above the Temple, to the Temple's God. Was he afflicted? He prayed. Was he merry? He sung psalms. Was he blessed with a golden harvest? He gave the firstfruits to God. Had he finished a vow? He went to

God to thank Him. Had he received any mercy, was he enriched with any blessing? He felt it his first duty to ask God's blessing, to give to God praise, and to expect prosperity in the ratio in which he did so. Does God expect less of us in this dispensation? And yet how often do we murmur when we lose, how rarely are we thankful when we gain! You will notice, too, in this account, that the person that made the offering was to lay his hand upon the head of the victim that was slain. What a beautiful picture is that of our interest in Christ Jesus! The poor Jew—though this was not confessing sin in this chapter, but giving thanks—yet whether he confessed his sins or gave thanks he did the same; he laid his hand upon the head of the victim, confessed his sins over it, gave thanks over it; and all the sin was transferred typically to the victim that suffered, and all the glory transferred typically to him who was the great antitype and object of that victim. Thus the believer still lays, not his literal hand—for ours is the economy of the Spirit; whatever a Jew did materially, mechanically, palpably, that a Christian does spiritually, but no less truly and really. The Jew laid his literal hand upon a literal victim's head; the Christian lays the trust of his heart upon an unseen but not an unknown Saviour. I say, the Jew laid his hand upon the head of his victim, confessed his sins, and was forgiven; the Christian lays, not his hand, but his heart, not upon a slain bullock or a slain lamb, but on a once slain but now living Saviour. And as sure as the Jew got ceremonial forgiveness by doing literally that act, so surely will the greatest sinner that thus leans, and looks to, and trusts in the only Atonement, receive the pardon and the remission of his sins. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *The peace sacrifice*:—"Peace through the blood of His Cross," "Reconciliation in the body of His flesh through death," "Fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ," are the great leading truths in the peace sacrifice. The prodigal's repentance, the return home, the ready embrace, the ring, the rich feast within the house, the mutual rest and rejoicing—all are here; nothing is lacking to assure our hearts before God. If there be any lack, it is our want of ability to appreciate the rich and varied grace displayed in every particular of the "peace-offering." Happy is it for us that the possession of its blessings does not depend upon the measure in which we understand the type. "The peace of God which passeth all understanding" is the sure portion of all the justified. It belongs to the babe in Christ as much as to the more advanced in Divine knowledge. (*F. H. White.*) *The sacrificial feast of the peace-offering*:—How are we to conceive of the sacrificial feast of the peace-offering? Was it a feast offered and presented by the Israelite to God, or a feast given by God to the Israelite? In other words, in this feast who was represented as host and who as guest? Among other nations than the Hebrews it was the thought in such cases that the feast was given by the worshipper to his god. This is well illustrated by an Assyrian inscription of Esarhaddon, who, in describing his palace at Nineveh, says: "I filled with beauties the great palace of my empire, and I called it 'the palace which rivals the world.' Ashur, Ishtar of Nineveh, and the gods of Assyria, all of them, I feasted within it. Victims, precious and beautiful, I sacrificed before them, and I caused them to receive my gifts." But here we come upon one of the most striking and instructive contrasts between the heathen conception of the sacrificial feast and the same symbolism as used in Leviticus and other Scripture. In the heathen sacrificial feasts it is man who feasts God; in the peace-offering of Leviticus it is God who feasts man. Do we not strike here one of the deepest points of contrast between all of man's religion and the gospel of God? Man's idea always is, until taught better by God: "I will be religious and make God my friend by doing something, giving something for God." God, on the contrary, teaches us in this symbolism, as in all Scripture, the exact reverse—that we become truly religious by taking, first of all, with thankfulness and joy, what He has provided for us. A breach of friendship between man and God is often implied in the heathen rituals, as in the ritual of Leviticus; as also in both a desire for its removal and renewed fellowship with God. But in the former man ever seeks to attain to this intercommunion of friendship by something that he himself will do for God. He will feast God, and thus God shall be well pleased. But God's way is the opposite. The sacrificial feast at which man shall have fellowship with God is provided, not by man for God, but by God for man, and is to be eaten, not in our house, but spiritually partaken in the presence of the invisible God. (*S. H. Kellogg, D.D.*) *Reason for minute prescriptions*:—Some may think that these prescriptions are so needlessly specific and minute that they appear unworthy of the God that instituted them. But you will recollect that this

people were surrounded by dense masses of heathenism, just as the Dutch are by the sea, and that every provision made in Israel was to keep at bay the inrush of heathenism, and to present a people that should be the witnesses of God in spite of heathendom; and the very rites and ceremonies that they were to practise were designedly minute, that there might be no opening for conformity to the heathen, very often crossing those of the heathen; that they might be a marked, a distinctive, and a peculiar people. There is, therefore, far greater wisdom in these prescriptions than strikes the superficial reader. And another reason why all this is given so minutely is that the great subject of the teaching of Christianity is the Atonement. That is the heart and the life of Christianity; all else without that is hard and dry; all its precepts pervaded by that are full of life, and not hard. Well, then, these rites and ceremonies were minute in order to impress upon the Jewish mind and upon the mind of humanity itself the great ideas of substitution, atonement, vicarious sacrifice, till this idea became so familiarised to the hearts of mankind that they should be able not only to appreciate, but to hail with gratitude and joy that perfect Atonement of which these were the shadows—that finished sacrifice to which these pointed as John the Baptist pointed to the Saviour. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*)

Peace-offerings turned to sin:—Few ordinances were more blessed than these peace-offerings. Yet, like the Lord's Supper with us, often were they turned to sin. The lascivious woman in Prov. vii. 14 comes forth saying, "I have peace-offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows." She had actually gone up among the devoutest class of worshippers to present a thank-offering, and had stood at the altar as one at peace with God. Having now received from the priest those pieces of the sacrifice that were to be feasted upon, lo! she hurries to her dwelling and prepares a banquet of lewdness. She quiets her conscience by constraining herself to spend some of her time and some of her substance in His sanctuary. She deceives her fellow-creatures, too, and maintains a character for religion; and then she rushes back to sin without remorse. Is there nothing of this in our land? What means Christmas mirth after pretended observance of Christ's being born? What means the sudden worldliness of so many on the day following their approach to the Lord's Table? What means the worldly talk and levity of a Sabbath afternoon or evening after worship is done? Contrast with this the true worshipper, as he appears in Ps. lxxvi. He has received mercies and is truly thankful. He comes up to the sanctuary with his offerings, singing, "I will go into Thy house with burnt-offerings: I will pay Thee my vows, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble." In the "burnt-offering" we see his approach to the altar with the common and general sacrifice; and next, in his "paying vows" we see he has brought his peace-offerings with him. Again, therefore, he says at the altar, "I will offer to Thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings." This is the general offering, brought from the best of his flock and herd. Then follow the peace-offerings. "With the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats." Having brought his offerings, he is in no haste to depart, notwithstanding; for his heart is full. Ere, therefore, he leaves the sanctuary he utters the language of a soul at peace with God (vers. 16-20). (*A. A. Bonar.*)

Charles Wesley's peace-offering:—Although Charles Wesley had been engaged in preaching the gospel with much diligence and earnestness, he did not know what it was to enjoy peace with God until he was in his thirtieth year. Being laid low by an alarming illness, and seeming as if he were going to die, a young Moravian named Peter Böhler, who was undergoing a course of preparation by him to go out as a missionary, asked him, "Do you hope to be saved?" Charles answered, "Yes." "For what reason do you hope it?" "Because I have used my best endeavours to serve God." The Moravian shook his head and said no more. That sad, silent, significant shake of the head shattered all Charles Wesley's false foundation of salvation by endeavours. He was afterwards taught by Peter Böhler the way of the Lord more perfectly, and brought to see that by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ men are justified. And now in his sick-room he was able to write for the first time in his life, "I now find myself at peace with God"; and it was on this occasion he composed that beautiful hymn, "O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise."

Peace proclaimed:—When Russia was in one of her great wars the suffering of the soldiers had been long and bitter, and they were waiting for the end of the strife. One day a messenger in great excitement ran among the tents of the army shouting, "Peace! peace!" The sentinel on guard asked, "Who says 'Peace'?" And the sick soldier turned on his hospital mattress and asked, "Who says 'Peace'?" And all up and down the encampment of the Russians went the question, "Who says, 'Peace'?" Then the messenger responded,

"The Czar says 'Peace.'" That was enough. That meant going home. That meant the war was over. No more wounds and no more long marches. So to-day, as one of the Lord's messengers, I move through this great encampment of souls and cry, "Peace between earth and heaven! Peace between God and man! Peace between your repenting soul and a pardoning Lord!" If you ask me, "Who says 'Peace'?" I answer, "Christ our King declares it." "My peace I give unto you!" "The peace of God that passeth all understanding." (*Christian Age.*) *On terms of peace with God*.—Some one could not understand why an old German Christian scholar used to be always so calm and happy and hopeful when he had so many trials and sicknesses and ailments. A man secreted himself in the house. He said, "I mean to watch this old scholar and Christian"; and he saw the old Christian man go to his room and sit down on the chair beside the stand and open the Bible and begin to read. He read on and on, chapter after chapter, hour after hour, until his face was all aglow with the tidings from heaven; and when the clock struck twelve he arose, shut his Bible, and said, "Blessed Lord, we are on the same old terms yet. Good-night. Good-night." *Praise-offering*.—A servant girl in great anxiety of soul sought the help of her minister. All his explanations of the gospel and applications of it to her case failed to bring peace. She said she had tried to pray, but dared not speak to God. "If you cannot pray," said the minister, "perhaps you can praise." He recommended her to go home and sing the 103rd Psalm—"O thou, my soul, bless God the Lord." She departed with a light heart, singing as she went. "And," said the minister in telling the story, "she is singing still, praising and praying and rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (*S. S. Chronicle.*) *Peace through Christ*.—A young lady went to Rome to study art. Having a great liking for it, she soon became one of the first modellers in the city. While she was busy at work one day a companion called to see her, and began to give a long description of a ball to which she had recently been, and talked of dresses, jewellery, flowers, &c. The young lady turned, and looking at her friend, said, "Be done; I am sick and tired of it. I have gone through and experienced it all myself." And then she added, "Oh, if you could only tell me where I might get rest!" Her companion, a little taken by surprise, hastily left. The young artist sat there wondering where she might find rest. She had secured the praise of man, but that did not satisfy her—she was looking for something higher; and shutting herself in her room that night, she began to think, and as she was thinking a bright thought entered her mind. She rose and brought forth a little Testament which had been lying untouched since a kind friend had given it to her with these words, "Now, mind, if ever you are in trouble, or weary, just open this little book and read, and you will find rest." And now she thought, "I will see if I can find the rest she promised." After she had looked a little her eyes fell on these words in Rom. v. 1: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Her eyes rested long on that verse, until at last she found Christ as her Saviour, and obtained rest in Him. *Peace through the Atonement*.—Professor Shedd has well said, "Whoever is granted this clear, crystalline vision of the Atonement will die in peace, and pass through all the unknown transport and terror of the day of doom with serenity and joy. It ought to be the toil and study of the believer to render his conceptions of the work of Christ more vivid, simple, and vital; for whatever may be the extent of religious knowledge in other directions, whatever may be the worth of his religious experience in other phases, there is no knowledge and no experience that will stand him in such stead in those moments that try the soul as the experience of the sense of guilt quenched by the blood of Christ." *Gospel peace*.—I saw a picture in London of the battle of Waterloo years after the battle had passed, and the grass had grown all over the sacred places, and the artist—for it was a masterpiece—had represented a dismounted cannon, and then a lamb, which had wandered up from the pasture field, sound asleep in the mouth of the cannon. Oh, what a suggestive picture it was to me! and I thought right away that the war between God and the soul is ended, and right amid the batteries of the law that once quaked with fiery death now you may behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

"I went to Jesus as I was,
Weary and worn and sad;
I found in Him a resting-place,
And He has made me glad."

(*T. De Witt Talmage.*) *Gratitude offering*.—A poor widow brought a basket of fine fruit to a rich man, and begged him to accept it as a present. He did so, knowing that he would make her happier by accepting it as a gift than he would by paying her for it liberally. The gift had cost her self-denial. She would not sell her choice fruit, that she might have the privilege of bestowing it upon one who needed nothing at her hands. She counted it a privilege to practise self-denial for the sake of one who was rich and needed nothing that she could give. Why was it? That rich man had saved the life of her son; he had found him, in want and sickness, in a distant city. He watched him till he was able to travel, when he furnished him with the means of returning to his mother. Hence her gratitude. Did that rich man place that widow under obligations to gratitude as God has placed every one of us? Has not God done for us infinitely more than that rich man did for the widow's son? Can we count up His favours to us? Can we estimate the value of His "unspeakable gift"? Do we count it a privilege to practise self-denial for His sake? Depend upon it, we have very little religion unless we can see and feel that it is a great privilege for a sinner to practise self-denial for his Saviour's sake. (*Great Thoughts.*) *The fat.*—*Fat and blood not to be eaten*.—You may here observe how they were forbidden to eat either fat or blood. The Lord's prohibition of fat might teach them to like and use a modest, moderate, and fitting diet, which, as it is good for the body, so also hath it profit for the soul. "He that loveth wine and oil," saith the wise man, "shall not be rich"; and "Beware of surfeiting and drunkenness, of excess and belly-cheer," often saith the Scripture in regard of the soul. Fasting and prayer are joined together, not feasting and prayer. A ship too much laden sinketh; and a body too much stuffed with fulness of bread perisheth. "It is a double conquest to conquer thyself," and "it is a double destruction to destroy thyself." John's meat was locusts and wild honey—a moderate diet. The companion of gluttony is rottenness, and the follower of drunkenness is forgetfulness and sottishness. God's people are here forbidden to eat their fat, and think ever on the meaning. Blood also was forbidden to them, that so they might learn to take heed of cruelty and to taste of mercy and lovingkindness in all their actions and behaviour. God is merciful, and we must follow Him; Satan and his members are bloody and cruel, we must avoid it. (*Bp. Babington.*) *If his offering be a goat.*—*The goat in sacrifice*.—The goat stands here in the same relation to the peace-offering from the herd as did the turtledove and pigeon to the bullock of the whole burnt sacrifice. The poorer sort might bring the goat; when he could not bring the blood of bulls he brought the blood of goats. And thus still they were prevented from attaching importance to the mere type. The goat represents Jesus, as one taken out of the flock for the salvation of the rest. Let us suppose we saw "a flock of goats appearing from Mount Gilead" (Song of Sol. vi. 5). The lion from Bashan rushes upon this flock; one is seized, and is soon within the jaws of the lion! This prey is enough; the lion is satisfied and retires; the flock is saved by the death of one. This incidental substitution does not indeed show forth the manner of our Substitute's suffering; but it is an illustration of the fact that one dying saved the whole flock. The goat is one of a class that go in flocks in Palestine, and so are fitted to represent Christ and His people. And perhaps the fact of an animal like the goat being selected to be among the types of Christ was intended to prevent the error of those who would place the value of Christ's undertaking in His character alone. They say, "Behold His meekness; He is the Lamb of God!" Well, all that is true; it is implied in His being "without blemish." But that cannot be the true point to which our eye is intended to be directed by the types; for what, then, becomes of the goat? They may tell us of the meekness of the lamb and patience of the bullock, and tenderness of the turtledove; but the goat, what is to be said of it? Surely it is not without a special providence that the goat is inserted where, if the order of chap. i. had been followed, we would have had a turtledove? The reason is to let us see that the main thing to be noticed in these types is the atonement which they represented. Observe the stroke that falls on the victim, the fire that consumes the victim, the blood that must flow from the victim, whether it be a bullock, a lamb, a turtledove, or a goat. The Socinian view of Christ's death is thus contradicted by these various types, and our eye is intently fixed on the atoning character of the animal more than on anything in its nature. (*A. A. Bonar.*)

CHAPTER IV.

VERS. 2-35. *If a soul shall sin through ignorance.—The sin and trespass-offerings:—*

I. THERE ARE, THEN, SOME LINGERING DEFILEMENTS AND TRESPASSES ADHERING TO MAN, EVEN THOUGH HE BE JUSTIFIED, CONSECRATED, AND IN FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD. A man may run from a gathering storm, and be terribly shocked at the idea of being caught in it, and exert all his wisdom and his power to escape it, and yet may be made to feel its force; and though a good man's whole being is averse to sin, and he can have no more fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, it can argue nothing against a remaining weakness subjecting him every day to lacks and failings which would undo him but for the pleadings of his Saviour's blood. Though his face and heart are fully turned away from sin, it proves nothing against his liability to be "overtaken by a fault." II. AND THESE LINGERING IMPERFECTIONS AND DEFECTS ARE REAL SINS. Men do not scruple to plead their ignorance, their infirmities, their natural and habitual propensities, in excuse for their misdeeds. But the law of God acknowledges no such plea. Sin is sin; and guilt is a part of its essential nature wherever found. True, in their effects upon the perpetrator, or in their influences upon society, some are worse than others; but in their relations to God and His holy law, they are always the same, always evil, abhorrent, and damning. Men may talk of "little sins," but God never does. Let them be never so little, they are big enough to sink the soul to everlasting death if uncanceled by the Saviour's blood. All this is very forcibly portrayed in the rites of the sin and trespass-offerings now under consideration. As to sins of ignorance, if the guilty party were a priest, he was to offer "a young bullock"; if a judge or magistrate, he was to offer "a kid of the goats," of the male kind; if one of "the common people," he was to offer "a kid of the goats," of the female kind, or a lamb. And so in the case of trespass, the guilty one was to offer "a lamb or kid"; or, if poor, two doves or young pigeons; or, if poor, and unable to procure the doves or pigeons, an offering of fine flour might be substituted as the representative of the animal or bird which could not be procured, but was to be looked upon, not as a meat-offering, but as a "sin-offering," the same as if it were a living animal. These offerings were then to be slain and burned, and their blood presented as the only adequate expiation. And from the nature of the expiation we are to learn God's estimate of the offence. Though committed in ignorance, or no more than a trespass, or an accidental contamination, it required blood and sacrifice to cover it. III. THERE IS ALSO A NOTICEABLE GRADATION IN THESE SINS OF IGNORANCE. Though they are all sins, so that blood only can atone for them, they are yet more serious and offensive in some persons than in others. When a priest or ruler sinned in this way, a more valuable sacrifice was required than when one of the common people thus sinned. The more prominent and exalted the person offending, the more flagrant was the offence. There is a very serious augmentation of responsibility going along with high station. A public man is like a town clock, upon which much more depends than upon private time-pieces. Hence the necessity for greater care and attention with reference to the one than to the other. IV. But whilst we are treating of these defects and failings which are to be found in Christian life, let us not overlook the principal point of the text, THAT THERE IS AN ADEQUATE REMEDY FOR THEM. What! are we to be told that Christ's infinite atonement is that shallow thing, that the first draw of the sinner upon it quite exhausts its virtue, and leaves all subsequent sins to be disposed of by the confessional, and the fires of purgatory? Are we to be told that Christ "ever liveth to make intercession," and for this reason "is able to save unto the uttermost," and yet that there is not virtue enough in His mediation to cover a few sins of ignorance and infirmity in Christian life? Are we to behold the priest of a typical economy, with the mere blood of beasts upon his fingers, obtaining a full remission for the Jew, and yet believe that our great High Priest in heaven, bearing the scars of deadly wounds endured for us, is unable to secure mercy for those struggling saints of God, who, in hours of surprise or weakness, become entangled again in guilt of which they heartily repented the moment it was done? Give us this, and we want no pontifical absolutions, no penal inflictions, no purgatorial fires, to make us acceptable to God. From this general subject we are now led to reflect—1. First, what a holy thing is God's law! It finds guilt, not only in the sins which are deliberate, but even in the mistakes of ignorance, the contaminations of accident, and the shortcomings of the holiest saints. 2. Second, what reason have we to

cultivate the modest virtues of Christian life—to be moderate in our pretensions, humble in our spirit, charitable in our censures, forgiving under injuries, lenient towards offenders, pungent in our self-examinations, hearty in our repentance, watchful in our walk, constant in our prayers, and deeply anxious to be firmly rooted in the true faith! I care not how good we may be, we are still great offenders, and much worse than we think we are. 3. Finally, how precious is the mercy of God in Christ Jesus! (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *The sin-offering*:—I. VIEW OUR BLESSED LORD AS MADE SIN FOR US. 1. His personal character is set forth in the victim chosen. It was a bullock, the most valuable of the sacrifices, an animal laborious in life and costly in death; it was a young bullock in the fullness of its strength and vigour; it was without blemish; and the slightest fault disqualified it from being laid upon the altar of God. Behold, O believer, your Lord Jesus, more precious far than ten thousands of the fat of fed beasts: a sacrifice not to be purchased with gold, or estimated in silver. Full of vigour, in the very prime of manhood, He offered up Himself for us. Even when He died, He died not through weakness; for that cry of His at His death, “with a loud voice,” proved that His life was still firm within Him, and that when He gave up the ghost, His death was not one of compulsion, but a voluntary expiring of the soul. His glory is as the firstling of the bullock, full of vigour and of strength. How distinctly was our Lord proved to be without blemish! Naturally born without sin, practically He lived without fault. 2. The act of the transference of sin to the victim next calls for our attention. This laying of the hand does not appear to have been a mere touch of contact, but in some other places of Scripture has the meaning of leaning heavily, as in the expression, “Thy wrath lieth hard upon me” (*Psa. lxxxviii. 7*). Surely this is the very essence of faith, which doth not only bring us into contact with the great Substitute, but teaches us to lean upon Him with all the burden of our guilt; so that if our sins be very weighty, yet we see Him as able to bear them all; and mark, the whole weight of our iniquity taken off from us, and laid on Him who took the weight and bore it all, and then buried it in His sepulchre for ever. 3. We must now beg your notice of the sins transferred. In the case of the type, they were sins of ignorance. Alas! the Jew knew nothing about a sin-offering for sins of presumption, but there is such a sin-offering for us. Our presumptuous sins were laid on Christ; our wilful sins, our sins of light and knowledge, are pardoned by His blood. The mention of sins of ignorance, suggests a very comfortable reflection, that if there are any sins which I know not, they were, notwithstanding my ignorance, laid on my Substitute and put away by His atonement. It is not sin as we see it which was laid on Christ, but sin as God sees it; not sin as our conscience feebly reveals it to us, but sin as God beholds it, in all its unmitigated malignity, and unconcealed loathsomeness. Sin in its exceeding sinfulness Jesus has put away. 4. Passing on, still keeping to the same point, we would remark that the sin was laid upon the bullock most conspicuously “before the Lord.” Did you notice the frequent expressions: “shall bring him to the door of the congregation before the Lord”; “kill the bullock before the Lord”; “shall sprinkle the blood seven times before the Lord, and shall put some of it upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the Lord”? Apart from the blood, we are guilty, condemned: washed in blood, we are accepted and beloved. Without the atonement we are aliens and strangers, heirs of wrath even as others; but, as seen in the eternal covenant purpose, through the precious blood of Jesus, we are accepted in the beloved. The great stress of the transaction lies in its being done “before the Lord.” 5. Still, further, carefully observe that as soon as ever the sin was thus “before the Lord,” laid upon the bullock, the bullock was slain. “He shall lay his hand upon the bullock’s head, and kill the bullock before the Lord.” So, in the fifteenth verse, “The elders of the congregation shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock before the Lord, and the bullock shall be killed before the Lord.” Ah! yes; as soon as the sin is transferred, the penalty is transferred too. Down fell the pole-axe the minute that the priestly hand had been laid on the bullock. Unsheathed was the knife of sacrifice the moment that the elders had begun to lean upon the sacrificial head. So was it with our Saviour; He must smart, He must die, for only as dying could He become our Sin-offering. II. THE EFFICACY OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF JESUS. 1. As soon as the bullock was slain, the priest carefully collected the blood. Seven times towards the veil the blood of the sin-offering was sprinkled. This was to show that our communion with God is by blood. 2. The next act of the priest was to retire a little from the veil to the place where stood the golden altar of incense, adorned with four horns of gold,

probably of a pyramidal shape, or fashioned like rams' horns, and the priest, dipping his finger in the basin, smeared this horn and the other, until the four horns glowed with crimson in the light of the golden candlestick. The horn is always, in the Oriental usage, indicative of strength. What was the blood put upon the altar for, then? That incense altar was typical of prayer, and especially of the intercession of Christ; and the blood on the horn showed that the force and power of all-prevailing intercession lies in the blood. Why was this the second thing done? It seems to me that the second thing which a Christian loses is his prevalence in prayer. Whereas first he loses communion with God when he back-slides, the next thing he loses is his power in supplication. He begins to be feeble upon his knees; he cannot win of the Lord that which he desireth. How is he to get back his strength? Here the great Anointed Priest teaches us to look to the blood for renewed power, for see, he applies the blood to the horns of the altar, and the sweet perfume of frankincense ascends to heaven, and God accepts it. 3. This being finished, the priest goes backwards still further and enters the court of the Israelites. There stood the great altar of brass, whereon was consumed the burnt-offerings; and now the priest, having the basin full of the blood of which only a small quantity had been used in sprinkling the veil and touching the horns of the golden altar, pours the whole of the remaining blood in a great stream at the foot of the altar of burnt-offering. What does that typify? Did he not thus teach us that the only ground and basis (for mark, it is put at the foot of the altar), of the acceptance of our persons and of our thank-offerings is found in the blood of Jesus? Thus I have tried to set forth the threefold prevalence of the precious blood, but let it not be forgotten that the blood also put away sin; for you find at the end of the chapter, "His sin shall be forgiven." First forgiven, then accepted, then prevalent in prayer, and then admitted into access with boldness to God; what a change of blessings! All, all through the blood of Jesus! III. Thirdly, the most painful part of our sermon remains, while I beg you to view the SHAME WHICH OUR LORD ENDURED. While it is all so well for us I want you now to reflect how bitter, how shameful it was for our Lord! The offerer who brought the sin-offering has been forgiven: he has been accepted at the brazen altar; his prayers have been heard at the golden altar; and the veil has been sprinkled on his behalf: but what of the victim itself? Draw nigh and learn with holy wonder. 1. In the first place, albeit that our Lord Jesus Christ was made sin for us, it is noteworthy that, though nearly all the bullock was burned without the camp, there was one portion left and reserved to be burnt upon the altar of burnt-offering—that was the fat. Certain descriptions are given as to the fat which was to be consumed upon the altar, by which we believe it was intended to ensure that the richest part of the fat should be there consumed. As much as if God would say, "Though My dear Son must be made sin for this people, and consequently I must forsake Him, and He must die without the camp, yet still He is most dear and precious in My sight, and even while He is a sin-offering, yet He is My beloved Son, with whom in Himself I am still well pleased." Whenever we speak about our Lord as bearing our sins, we must carefully speak concerning Him—not as though God ever did despise or abhor the prayer of His afflicted Son, but only seemed to do so while He stood for us, representatively made sin for us, though He knew no sin. Oh! I delight to think that the Lord smelled a sweet savour even in the Cross, and that Jesus Christ is this day a sweet savour unto God, even as a sin-offering; the fat, the excellence of His heart, the consecration of His soul, were acceptable to God, and sweet in His esteem, even when He laid upon Him the iniquity of His people. Still, here is the shameful part of it: the priest then took the bullock, and gathering up all the inwards, every part of it, the skin, the dung—all mentioned to teach us what a horrible thing sin is, and what the Surety was looked upon as being when He took our sin—He took it all up, and either Himself personally, or assisted by others, took it away out of the camp. 2. After the removal, they gathered the hot ashes, they kindled the fire, and burnt it all. See here a faint image of the fire which consumed the Saviour on Calvary! His bodily pains ought never to be forgotten, but still the sufferings of His soul must have been the very soul of His sufferings; and can you tell what they were? (C. H. Spurgeon.) *The sin-offering*:—I. IN CONTRAST WITH THE OTHER OFFERINGS. (1) The sin-offering, though without spot or blemish, was yet not a sweet-savour offering. The distinction is this: the sweet-savour offerings were for acceptance; the others for expiation. In the first class sin is not seen at all—it is simply the faithful Israelite satisfying Jehovah. In the sin-offerings it is just the reverse—it is an offering charged with

the sin of the offerer. In the sin-offerings, as in the burnt-offerings, Christ is Offerer : but here He is seen standing for us under the imputation of sin. For though in Himself without sin, "the Holy One," yet He became our Substitute, confessed our sins as His sins, and bore their penalty. (2) The sin-offering was burnt without the camp. This testified how completely the offering was identified with the sin it suffered for ; so completely identified that it was itself looked at as sin, and as such cast out of the camp into the wilderness. A part indeed, "the fat," was burnt on the altar, to show that the offering, though made a sin-bearer, was in itself perfect. But the body of the victim, "even the whole bullock," was cast forth without the camp. "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate." He was cast out as one who was unfit for Jerusalem, as unworthy a place in the city of God. And what this must have cost that Blessed One can never be entered into or understood till the holiness of Christ and the sinfulness of sin are seen in measure at least as God sees them. (3) The third peculiarity we may note in the sin-offering is, that it was an offering for sin, not an offering for trespass. God judges what we are as well as what we do ; our sin, the sin in us, as much as our trespasses. In His sight sin in us, our evil nature, is as clearly seen as our trespasses, which are but the fruit of that nature. He needs not wait to see the fruit put forth. He knows the root is evil, and so will be the buddings. Now the distinction between the sin and trespass-offerings is just this : the one is for sin in our nature, the other for the fruits of it. Thus in the sin-offering no particular act of sin is mentioned, but a certain person is seen standing confessedly as a sinner : in the trespass-offering certain acts are enumerated, and the person never appears. II. THE VARIETIES IN THIS OFFERING. (1) The first variety which is seen in the sin-offering is the difference in the animal offered. In the burnt-offering, the offering though varied was limited, either to a bullock, a lamb, a goat, or turtledoves. Here in the sin-offering we have several other grades, coming down at last to a sin-offering composed of simple "flour." Suffice it to say that here, as in the burnt-offerings, they show us the different characters under which the offering of Christ may be apprehended by us. In the sin-offering, as in the burnt-offering, one saint has one view, another another view respecting the character of the offering. (2) The next variety we may notice is in the person offering : we have the priest, the congregation, the ruler, and the common Israelite. First in order we have the sin-offering for the priest ; then the sin-offering for the whole congregation ; then the sin-offering for a ruler ; then for one of the common people ; and lastly, the sin-offering for particular sins ; in which last the person of the offerer is lost sight of, and the particular act for which he offers more clearly seen. This last is very nearly akin to the trespass-offering, and is indeed called indifferently by both names of sin and trespass. In this last class, as in the lowest classes of the other offerings, we get the lowest view which can be taken of this particular aspect of the offering. But what is the import of this variety in the person offering ? They are only different measures of apprehension. Of course the Offerer here, as elsewhere, is Christ, made under the law, our Representative. As such He is here seen confessing sin ; but though seen as Offerer in this aspect, He may yet be seen very differently. For example, in the first case the offerer is apprehended as "priest," a person who stands the representative of a family or congregation. In other cases the offerer is seen as "one of the common people," one who stands simply the representative of an individual. In the lowest cases of all, the person of the offerer is altogether lost sight of, neither individual nor congregation are seen, and the sin for which he suffers is almost the only thing apprehended. (3) A third variety in the sin-offering has reference to "the blood." In the higher classes the blood was sprinkled on the incense altar ; in the lower classes it was not taken into the Holy Place, but sprinkled upon the brazen altar in the court. The deeper the apprehension of the efficacy of the blood, the deeper will be the sense of that from which it delivers us. (4) A fourth variety in the sin-offering has reference to "the fat." In the higher grades the fat was burnt upon the altar ; in the lowest class this is overlooked : what was done with the fat is entirely unnoticed. "The fat" represents the general health and energy of the whole body. Its being burnt to God was the appointed proof that the victim offered for sin was yet in itself acceptable. This acceptability is most seen in the higher classes, but it is apprehended also in all save the lowest grade. There the atonement made for sin is indeed apprehended, but the perfect acceptableness of the victim is unnoticed. So with some Christians, is not their thought respecting the sin-offering more of our

pardon than of Christ's perfectness? (5) Another variety we may observe in the sin-offering has reference to "the body" of the victim. In the higher grades it is cast without the camp; in the lower this is unnoticed; but in the law of the offerings another particular is marked; the priest is seen to feed on the offering. The import of this distinction is at once obvious. Where the sin-offering is fully apprehended, the victim, which is the sin-bearer, is seen accursed, and as such cast out as unclean into the wilderness. Where the sin-offering is more partially apprehended, the victim is still seen as sin-bearer, but the reality of its separation from God is lost sight of, and its death viewed merely as satisfying the Mediator. And how exactly this accords with the successive stages of Christian experience will be sufficiently understood by those who know much either of themselves or others. At first Christ's work, or person, or offering, is viewed with interest solely on account of what it is to us. It has taken away our sins; it has made atonement; this is the one thing, and almost the sole thing, seen respecting it. Anything further than this at such a stage would appear a grand impertinence. But let the question of peace with God be settled, let our acceptance become a thing known and realised, then the perfectness of the offering, and what it is in itself, will, without exception, be more seen and dwelt upon. (6) The last variety I will here notice in the different grades of the sin-offering is connected with the name by which the offering is variously designated. In the higher classes it is always called a "sin-offering," and no particular act of trespass is noticed; in the lower classes it is called a "trespass-offering" as well as a "sin-offering," and the person of the offerer is lost sight of in the particular trespass. So when the measure of apprehension is limited, there will be want of intelligence respecting the precise difference of sin and trespass; nor this alone; the offering will be seen only for sins; that it is offered for persons will not be apprehended. We have thus gone through the particulars of the sin-offering, as far at least as they are given in the law of the offerings. In other places there are some other details added, the principles of which are, however, all contained in what we have investigated. The additions only give us some new combinations as to the character under which the sin-offering may be exhibited: I refer to the offerings of the red heifer (Numb. xix.), and of the scapegoat on the great Day of Atonement (chap. xvi.). The offering of the red heifer, as we might expect from its being found in Numbers, exhibits not so much what the offering is in itself, as its use in meeting the wants of the wilderness. Thus no memorial of it was burnt on the altar, nor was the blood seen to be taken into the Tabernacle; but the whole animal was burnt without the camp, and its ashes laid up to be mixed with the water of purification. Then when an Israelite found himself unclean, through contact with the dead, these ashes with water were sprinkled on him. All this is the sin-offering as meeting our need of cleansing, and as given to remove the defilement caused by the dead things of the wilderness. The view presented by it has to do with the effects of the offering, and its use towards man as applied by water, that is the Spirit. In the scapegoat, offered on the great day of atonement, the view presented is very different. In this sin-offering, which was offered but once a year, the blood was seen to be put on the mercy-seat. The offering it spoke of is shown (Heb. x. 1, 22) to have been "once for ever," and "access into the holiest" the consequence of it. (*A. Jukes.*) *The sin-offering; or, God just and justifier*:—The most awful and terrible aspect of Jesus' death is presented in this type. In the burnt-offering He is seen as the "Delight" of the Father (Prov. viii. 30), the One in whom He is "well pleased" (Matt. xvii. 5), in the peace-offering we behold Him as the blessed Peacemaker (Matt. v. 9; Col. i. 20). But in—I. THE SIN-OFFERING we are shown the heinousness, the awful nature of sin, that called for such a sacrifice. Atonement is its chief feature. The Blessed One "knew no sin," yet He hung upon the Cross as "an offering for sin" (Isa. liii. 10), the sin-bearer, the personation of that "abominable thing" that God hates (Jer. xlv. 4). Studying the details of sin-offering, we read—II. "IF A SOUL . . . SIN THROUGH IGNORANCE." All are sinners by nature (Rom. iii. 23, v. 12), and ever prone to sin, by reason of the root of evil that dwells within. This root it is that is specially met in sin-offering (Rom. viii. 3; Heb. ix. 26), the sinful nature, more perhaps than the actions that spring therefrom, though these are included; but till God opens our eyes to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and how the smallest sin separates from Him, and endangers our eternal safety, we are—so to speak—sinning ignorantly. Still, no sin—even when done in ignorance—can be passed over or forgiven by a holy God "without shedding of blood"; hence God, in His grace and mercy, has provided a complete, a perfect atonement,

in the "precious blood" shed (Heb. ix. 22, 28, x. 12; 1 Pet. i. 19). Even after being "made nigh," how prone are we to sin! But see Psa. xxxvii. 24; Prov. xxiv. 16. To sin "through ignorance" signifies, not only through actual want of knowledge, but through weakness—failing to lay hold of the "power" to keep (1 Pet. i. 5)—unintentionally offending, and not realising at the time the guilt; for, in truth, who can fully realise what is sin in the sight of a holy God? But He foresaw all, and provided a perfect Sacrifice sufficient to meet it all, whether the sin be committed by "anointed priest," "whole congregation," a "ruler," or "one of the common people." The variation in the offerings teaches how sin becomes deeper, according to the position or privileges of the sinning one. The more prominent were these, the greater the harm done by evil example. III. THE LAYING OF HANDS on the victim's head teaches much. 1. Sense of sin, and need of pardon (Psa. li. 4; Luke xviii. 13; 1 Tim. i. 15). "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi. 23); hence I need a substitutionary sacrifice. "Who shall deliver me?" (Rom. vii. 24). 2. Transmission of guilt; truth of deepest importance. "The Lord hath laid . . ." (Isa. liii. 6). "Christ . . . suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust," &c. (1 Pet. iii. 18). The holy Jesus received "the wages of sin." "He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself"; He overcame "through death" (Heb. ii. 14) the one who had introduced it into the world; and thus the Just One could—without the smallest sacrifice of His justice—exercise His prerogative of mercy, and be "the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 24–26). 3. Faith in God's acceptance of a substitutionary sacrifice (Rom. iv. 25, v. 1, 9). The offering was slain for the offerer; it was laden typically with his sins, as was the holy Jesus actually when He was "made a curse for us" (Gal. iii. 10–13). As we meditate on these things we cannot wonder at another feature of the sin-offering. IV. NOT VOLUNTARY. There is nothing in this type—as in others—to show willingness on the part of the Holy One, and our Lord's words in Gethsemane plainly show how He shrank from being "made sin"—that hateful thing which would separate Him from His God and Father. Hence the prayer thrice repeated, with increasing earnestness (Matt. xxvi. 39–44; Luke xxii. 42–45): which contrast with the willingness displayed in the words (Psa. xl. 7, 8, with Heb. x.). V. THE ANIMALS sacrificed as sin-offerings varied (chap. iv. 3, 14, 23, 28, 32), according to whether it was for the "priest," "whole congregation," "ruler," or "one of the common people." Also, as before observed, no one type could ever suffice to depict the glorious Antitype; therefore no doubt some different characteristic or aspect of the Blessed One, in His passion, is set forth in each of the animals sacrificed. (*Lady Beaujolois Dent*). *The sin-offering; or, expiation and forgiveness*.—I. THE SIN-OFFERING shadows forth the fulfilment of Psa. lxxxv. 10; mercy can be shown to sinners in the "free gift of . . . eternal life" (Rom. vi. 23, R.V.), because God's truth as to sin's "wages" was verified on Calvary. Righteousness, *i.e.*, the righteous judgment of a holy God, was shown in the just punishment of "sin," borne by a sinless victim; and Peace becomes the portion of every soul taught by the Holy Spirit to know that Jesus was punished for him or her; that is, every one that believes in God's acceptance of Christ's substitutionary Sacrifice (Rom. iv. 25, v. 1). II. THE BLOOD strikingly shows the double aspect of this mighty sacrifice. "The life . . . is in the blood" (chap. xvii. 11). Life was forfeited by fall (Gen. ii. 17, iii. 19; Rom. v. 12); therefore life must be taken, blood must be shed (Ezek. xviii. 4, 20; Heb. ix. 22), a substitutionary victim must be slain, before a holy God could pardon and accept the sinner. Jesus died, He shed His "precious blood," and through it we have "redemption" (Matt. xxvii. 50; John xix. 34; Rom. v. 8, 9; Eph. i. 7). Observe what was done with the blood. 1. For anointed priest, or whole congregation, it was to be sprinkled "seven times before the Lord, before the veil" (chap. iv. 6, 7, 17, 18), and put on "horns of altar of sweet incense"; seven betokening completeness, and horns power. We thus learn the completeness of restoration to worship and communion—interrupted by sin—through the power of Jesus' blood, shed on Calvary's Cross, and brought symbolically into the very presence of God for us: the ground, too, of His advocacy for us, as our "Great High Priest" (1 John ii. 1, 2; Heb. ix. 14). The higher the position, privilege, light, the greater the sin. The anointed priest was in a very blessed position, admitted daily to minister in the Tabernacle; and the whole congregation were marked by Jehovah's favour. They were His "redeemed" or "purchased" people, called by Him, His "son," "a peculiar treasure," &c. (Exod. xv. 13, 16, iv. 22, xix. 5); brought into covenant relationship with Jehovah, who Himself dwelt in their midst, guarding and guiding them night and day (Exod. xiii. 21, 22). And they were encamped around His

habitation, as accepted worshippers, through the medium of the priesthood and offerings. Hence, when sin entered, blood alone could atone and restore. 2. For a ruler or one of the common people the priest must put blood on the horns of the altar of burnt-offering (chap. iv. 25, 30), telling of the power of the atoning blood to cleanse from all sin, and restore basis for worship, peace, &c. 3. All the blood was to be poured out at the bottom of the altar (vers. 7, 18, 25, 30, 34). This was to be done in every case, as there atonement, or reconciliation, was made; there the Lord met with the children of Israel (Exod. xxix. 42, 43). The pouring out tells of the fulness of the atonement made by Jesus. He "poured out His soul unto death" (Isa. liii. 12; Psal. xxii. 14); made "reconciliation for iniquity" (Dan. ix. 24); gave "His life a ransom," &c. (Matt. xx. 28; 1 Tim. ii. 6); and in Him—our "Altar" (Heb. xiii. 10)—God and the sinner meet. III. FINE FLOUR. It is thought that in chap. ix., sin, as the root of all evil, the great principle of evil within, is specially dealt with, and when it shows itself in the committal of sin—though of ignorance—it must be judged by a holy God. In chap. v. certain sinful actions are specified (vers. 1–4), and dealt with in the same spirit (vers. 5–13); but while again we see how a just and holy God must punish sin, we see also how a God of love meets the need of every sinner—even the poorest—by permitting fine flour to be offered, when the offender was "not able" to bring any of the animals named. IV. THE BURNING, again, shows the double aspect of the holy Sufferer, by the two words used. 1. The fat, and portions of the inwards (as in peace-offering)—representing the rich excellences, heart and affections reserved for God Himself—were to be burnt as incense, or "savour of delight," upon the altar of burnt-offerings (chap. iv. 8–10, 19, 26, 35). Striking testimony to the intrinsic worth of the holy Jesus, even when presented to our gaze as "made sin!" 2. The whole bullock was to be burnt—in judgment—"without the camp" (chap. iv. 11, 12). The animal was—typically—loaded with man's sin. It represented man in his corrupt state, outwardly and inwardly evil (Rom. iii. 12, vii. 18): head guiding, legs walking, in evil ways, engendered within (James i. 15); therefore too loathsome to remain in sight of holy God, or be consumed with fire on His altar or table. The sin-offering must be cast forth—so to speak—from His presence. Thus "sin" was "laid upon" the sinless Son of God; the holy Jesus was separated from God, when, "in the likeness of sinful flesh," He "suffered without the gate" (Rom. viii. 3; Heb. xiii. 11, 12). The gate of the very city chosen of God to put His Name there. Yes—outside its walls, the holy Son of God was crucified in a place set apart for the execution of malefactors (John xix. 16–18). 3. "In a clean place" the bullock was to be burnt, "where the ashes" of burnt-offering were poured out (chap. iv. 12). Ashes told of "redemption" accomplished, and the pouring out of those of burnt-offering, of acceptance of "finished" work. The "body" of Jesus was laid in a "new tomb" (Matt. xxvii. 60), "with the rich in His death" (Isa. liii. 10); token of work "finished," complete reconciliation made, "eternal redemption" obtained (Heb. ix. 12). V. "OUTSIDE THE CAMP"—"the gate," full of deep teaching, can here but point to subjects for meditation and study, sufficient for whole lesson. 1. Christ forsaken of God, "made a curse for us" (Psal. xxii. 1; Matt. xxvii. 46; Gal. iii. 13), showing both desert of sinner and fate of those who die unrepentant and unpardoned, and must therefore bear the curse due to—God's judgment upon—their own sin. 2. Christ rejected by His own—by the world (John i. 11; Luke xxiii. 18, 24; xix. 14); bearing reproach, scorn (Psal. xlii. 10; lxi. 9, 20; Rom. xv. 3; Matt. xxvii. 43), buffeted, scourged, crucified (Matt. xxvi. 67, xxvii. 26, 30–35). 3. All who are Christ's are called to be "separate from the world," "bearing His reproach" (2 Cor. xii. 10; Heb. xiii. 13), for "the servant is not greater than his Lord" (John xiii. 16, xv. 20); hated by, crucified to world, "with Christ" (John xvii. 14; Gal. vi. 14, ii. 20). 4. Christ, the "Saviour of the world" (John iv. 42; 1 John iv. 14). Place of Gentiles was outside the camp, so may here see how Christ died—"not for that nation only," &c. (John xi. 51, 52). (*Ibid.*)

On sins connected in ignorance:—I. MAN'S OWN DISPOSITION IS TO CONDONE INADVERTENT SINS. 1. Ignorance is treated as if synonymous with guiltlessness. 2. The responsibilities which attach to the knowledge become secretly a reason why knowledge is eschewed. II. WHEREIN THE GUILTINESS OF INADVERTENT SINS CONSISTS. 1. What such sinfulness has wrought. The death of the Saviour. 2. Sin in ignorance is the embodiment in action of those dark principles of enmity against God which lie embosomed in the human heart. III. GOD'S EMPHATIC WITNESS AGAINST INADVERTENT SINS. 1. Sources of Divine remonstrance against such sins. Nature. Scripture. Conscience. 2. Man's resistance of the Divine remonstrance. 3. How

is such daring ignorance fostered? (1) By the perversion of revealed truth. (2) By erroneous teaching. IV. GODLY SOULS ARE BETRAYED INTO THE COMMISSION OF INADVERTENT SINS. When Christians give themselves up to the guidance of any individual, or of any system, not strictly accordant with God's revealed truth, they will surely act against Christ and His commandments ignorantly. V. SINS IN THE GODLY ARE MOST HEINOUS IN GOD'S ESTEEM. Sin is to be estimated by a man's spiritual elevation. VI. EXPIATION PROVIDED FOR SINS OF INADVERTENCE. 1. Against whom the sins were committed. Blood sprinkled "before the Lord." 2. The process of purging. 3. Its suggestion of death. 4. Its suggestion of wrath. VII. TYPICAL INTIMATIONS OF CHRIST'S DEATH FOR MAN'S SINS. 1. God's condemnation of our Substitute. 2. God's acceptance of our Substitute. (*The Preacher's Hom. Com.*)

Ignorance in sinning:—I. MAN'S PERCEPTION OF RIGHT AND WRONG CANNOT BE AN ALLOWED STANDARD. He may "sin through ignorance." 1. Neither his judgment nor his conscience is an adequate guide. 2. Hence the inquiry, What is sin? must be determined from without a man, not from within. God must be heard. 3. The presence of sin in man, even ignorantly contracted, imperils man's relationship to God. It interrupts man's approach to God, prevents his acceptable worship of God, and alienates his relationship with God. II. GOD'S ESTIMATE AND MEASUREMENT OF SIN REGULATED THE ATONEMENT. A full atonement for all sin has been made in Christ. 1. This, if apprehended, lays the ground of a settled peace. 2. This will exalt our conception of the fulness and efficacy of the Saviour's sacrifice. 3. This will assure us of acceptable and satisfactory fellowship with God, since all sin is propitiated. III. Ignorance concerning sin argues MAN'S REAL HELPLESSNESS IN DEALING WITH IT. (*W. H. Jellie*). *Sins of infirmity*:—1. Even sins of infirmity contract a guilt upon the soul; yea, such a guilt as needs atonement and expiation in the blood of Jesus Christ. Do not slight sins of infirmity, for then they become more than mere infirmities. 2. Here is relief unto faith against those usual complaints of daily infirmities, which many gracious souls so much complain of and mourn under. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all our sins. 3. Here is great encouragement to engage in the service and work of God, notwithstanding our own infirmities and disabilities. The Lord hath provided a sin-offering for us; He will accept our sincere, though weak endeavours, and pardon our failings. 4. Take notice what continual obligations of love are upon us to Jesus Christ. We have such continual need of Him. (*S. Mather*). *The sin-offering*:—Sin! The sound is brief. But it presents a dark abyss of thought. No mind can trace its birth. No eye can see its death. It ever rolls an ever-deepening course. Think much of sin. It is earth's death-blow. It marred the beauty of a beautiful world. It is man's ruin. Its most tremendous blight fell on our inner life. It drove the soul from peaceful fellowship with God. Its terrible destructions die not in the grave. It works this bitter and eternal anguish, because God's curse attends it. As the bright sun behind a threatening cloud, the sin-offering waits to change the aspect. Though sin is death, the sinner need not die. There is a fortress of escape. Such are the tidings of the sin-offering. Say, is not this the truth of truths? Mark, now, how the sin-offering in every part proves sin to be a vanquished foe. There are indeed some grades of difference in this type, as rank or as offence might differ. The first example will illustrate all. The offender is the anointed priest (chap. iv. 3). Sin has allured—ensnared—defiled him. But now he sees his guilt. He cannot rest till pardon be obtained. God's voice directs his course. He must bring a young unblemished bullock to the Tabernacle door. Behold the proof, that God has found a ransom. This is an idle and an empty rite, except it shows the victim of God's choice. This is but mockery, except it witnesses, that help is laid on the redeeming Jesus. A solemn act is next enjoined. The offender's hands must touch the victim's head. This sign, too, has no meaning, unless it bids the sin-lost to transmit their guilt. The proxy is then slain (chap. iv. 4). Sin must have death. The curse must fall. Believer, your sins slew Christ. They cannot now slay you. His death is yours. The precious rite continues to unfold the Saviour's worth. It shows three uses of the outpoured blood. 1. The veil is sprinkled seven times (chap. iv. 6). This hung before the mercy-seat. It was the entrance to the holiest place. The truth is manifest. They, who would enter heaven, must plead blood shed. 2. Part dyed the golden altar's horns (chap. iv. 7). This was the place where incense rose, as emblem of ascending prayer. Christ's intercession is salvation's crown. 3. The brazen altar drank the rest (chap. iv. 7). Thus all is used to bring assurance to the anxious heart. Each drop subserves its part. Atonement needs the whole. The whole is

given. (*Dean Law.*) *Sins of infirmity*:—1. To take heed by the fall of others (ver. 3). If the pillars may bend, and the chief props of the house shake, what shall the tender rafters do? “Be not high-minded, but fear.” 2. To bear with them that are weak (Gal. vi. 1). He more easily excuses sin in others, who himself is bitten with the consciousness of his own infirmity. 3. Of the greatness of the sin of the priests. As by their good life and doctrine they save themselves and those who hear them, so by the contrary they destroy both. 4. To bear patiently the momentary afflictions of this life (ver. 12; cf. Heb. xiii. 13). We should in our meditation and desire go out of the world, as out of the camp, and be content to bear reproach for Christ’s sake, seeing we shall have no long continuance here, but look for an everlasting habitation in heaven. 5. The multitude of sinners does not excuse sin (ver. 13). 6. The prince is to take notice of his error (ver. 22). (*A. Willet, D.D.*) *Sins unperceived*:—These are not sins of omission, but acts committed by a person when at the time he did not suppose that what he did was sin. Although he did the thing deliberately, yet he did not perceive the sin of it. So deceitful is sin, we may be committing that abominable thing which cast angels into an immediate and an eternal hell, and yet at the moment be totally unaware! Want of knowledge of the truth and too little tenderness of conscience hide it from us. Hardness of heart and a corrupt nature cause us to sin unperceived. But here again the form of the Son of Man appears! Jehovah, God of Israel, institutes sacrifice for sins of ignorance, and thereby discovers the same compassionate and considerate heart that appears in our High Priest, “who can have compassion on the ignorant!” (Heb. v. 2). Amidst the types of this Tabernacle we recognise the presence of Jesus; it is His voice that shakes the curtains and speaks in the ear of Moses, “If a soul shall sin through ignorance!” The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever! (*A. A. Bonar.*) *The sin-offering*:—The sin-offering, although first in order of application, came last in order of institution. It is distinctly a creation of the law. Sin having become, by the commandment, “exceeding sinful,” the remedy provided by the law was the sin-offering, with all its elaborate ritual. The most prominent feature is the sprinkling of the blood. The blood being that which atones (chap. xvii. 11), it naturally comes most prominently forward in that which was especially the atoning sacrifice. The sin-offerings fall into two classes—viz., those whose blood was taken into the Tabernacle, placed upon the horns of the golden altar, and sprinkled seven times before the veil; and those whose blood was not taken into the Tabernacle, but only placed upon the horns of the brazen altar which stood in the outer court. To the first class belong the sin-offerings of the high priest (vers. 3–12), and of the whole congregation (vers. 13–21); to the second, those offered by rulers (vers. 22–26), or by any of the common people (vers. 27–35). Certain portions of the sacrifice were laid upon the altar of burnt-offering (vers. 8–10); the main part was dealt with in one of two ways—in sin-offerings of the first class mentioned above, it was consumed by fire outside the camp (vers. 12, 21); in other cases, viz., where the blood was not carried into the Tabernacle, it became the food of the officiating priests (chap. vi. 26, 29; x. 17, 18); the greater part of the blood was poured away at the bottom of the altar of burnt-offering (vers. 7, 18, 25, 30, 34). Tradition adds that it descended thence into the valley of the Kedron. It is to be observed that a sin-offering was ordained to consist of one animal only, and that in each case the precise offering to be made was specified. “Men were not allowed to choose or multiply their sin-offerings, as if there could really be any proportion between their gift and the privileges to which it readmitted them, lest they should dream of compensating for so much sin by so much sacrifice.” According to the unanimous tradition of the Jews, a verbal confession of the sin or sins for which the offering was brought accompanied the imposition of hands in the case of sin and trespass-offerings. The next point to be noticed is that remarkable provision of the law by which it was ordained that the majority of the sin-offerings should be eaten by the priests. The explanation of this is given in chap. x. 17. The people’s sin passed into the very substance of the priests who thus “in a deep mystery neutralised, through the holiness vested in them by their consecration, the sin which the offerer had laid upon the victim and upon them.” By this solemn act, which served but to increase the guilt of an unholy priesthood, the priests became in a remarkable manner types of Him who was “made sin for us.” It remains to inquire, For what sins did the sin-offering atone? Clearly not for wilful breaches of any of God’s commandments (2 Cor. iii. 7; Heb. ii. 2; x. 28; also Numb. xv. 27–31; Deut. xvii. 12). The law proclaimed aloud that “the wages of sin is death.” For what, then, were the Mosaic sacrificial atonements

available? The cases which admitted the application of a sin or trespass-offering may be brought under four heads—viz., (1) bodily defilements (chap. v. 2, 3; xii. 6, 7; xv. 13-15, 25-30); (2) ceremonial offence (chap. v. 15-19); (3) certain specified cases of moral transgression knowingly committed, in favour of which an exception from the general severity of the law was admitted, and an atonement ordained (chap. vi. 1-7); (4) sins of ignorance and inadvertency, or offences unwittingly done (chap. iv. 2, 13, 22, 27; v. 15, 18; Numb. xv. 24-29). These last formed the largest class of offences to be atoned for by the Mosaic sacrifices. All this vast and complicated machinery of confession, bloodshed, sacrifice, and priestly atonement existed in the main for what, in modern language, we should call *venial* sins, for sins committed in ignorance or inadvertence—it might almost be said, for involuntary sins. One great lesson, then, which the system of atonement under the law must have taught, was the extreme heinousness of sin, since even “little” sins, as men might call them, had to be atoned by blood. (*E. F. Willis, M.A.*)

Sins of ignorance:—I know nothing that gives a higher view of the holiness of God than this: that not only sins that we culpably and deliberately commit are guilt in His sight, but that we commit sins in our ignorance which are sins though we do not suppose them to be so. God’s law is a fixture, and is not dependent upon our estimate. There is sin committed in the dark as well as noonday. Sin committed by those who are not acquainted with it as such, as well as when committed, though it may be aggravated in the last case by those who are acquainted with it, is still sin. Now, it has been said that sins committed in ignorance are no sins at all; and that the ignorance of a duty is atonement for omitting that duty, or expiatory of the sin. My answer is—ignorance may extenuate our guilt, but it does not in the least modify the sin, or make an atonement for it. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*)

The sin-offering:—There is a prevailing disposition in the hearts of many to think of sins of ignorance as if they were no sins; or if it be allowed that they need mercy, such mercy is regarded rather as a right than as the free and unmerited gift of grace. Ignorance in the minds of such persons becomes synonymous with guiltlessness; to act conscientiously (however dark or dead the conscience) is to act blamelessly. The thought of the responsibilities that attach to knowledge becomes secretly a reason why knowledge is eschewed. In a word, darkness is loved rather than light, because darkness brings quiet, but light has awakening and convicting power. A sufficient answer to all such thoughts is this—that the especial reason for the appointment of the sin-offering was, that it might meet sins committed in ignorance. The heinousness of such sins of ignorance depends, not so much on the character of the deed done as on that condition of heart which is capable of committing sin without knowing that it is sin, and commits it, perhaps exultingly, triumphing in it as good. What must angels in heaven think of the state of that soul which is so thoroughly blinded, so utterly astray from God, as to violate His commandments and resist His will in total unconsciousness that it is doing wrong? What can be more terrible than a conscience so hardened? Nothing has a greater tendency to bring the conscience into this state, and to lead to the daring commission of sins of ignorance, than religious truth perverted. It would be happy, indeed, if we could assert, even of real Christians, that they are free from these fearful sins of ignorance. But whenever they give themselves up to the guidance of any individual, or of any system whose influence is not strictly according to the revealed truth of God, they will surely act against Christ and His commandments ignorantly. There is nothing, perhaps, at this present moment, that is operating more terribly against the progress of truth than the misdirected energies of real Christians, ignorantly sustaining error, ignorantly resisting light. If, then, there may be sins of ignorance, even where there is most diligence and watchfulness, how much more where there is negligence or slumber, or acquiescence in the prevailing evil of the age! There has been only One on earth free from sins of ignorance, even He who said, “I have set the Lord always before me”; and He came to be our Sin-offering—to bear the wrath due to these very sins of ignorance; otherwise, they alone would have sunk us into perdition for ever. The chapter before us, as being addressed to those who were ostensibly the separate people of God, teaches us especially respecting sins of ignorance committed by believers. The greater our privileges, the nearer we are brought to God; the more intimately we are connected with His service, the more terrible must be the consequences of transgression. . . . In atonement, Divine holiness requires in the Surety not only that He should bear every penalty, but that He should also present a substitutional perfectness for us. There are few chapters worthy of more solemn consideration than this. It teaches

us the deep responsibility of all positions of ostensible service, especially such as are influential over the minds and habits of others. Any influence we may possess, any ability of instructing, comforting, or in any way helping others, by word or by example, is a talent which we cannot escape the responsibility of using. The priests of God (and all believers are priests) must act, and that, too, openly. But how needful that they should well consider the responsibility of their position; the danger in which they are of acting ignorantly, and the disastrous effects of such ignorance, in dishonouring God and injuring others who may be involved in the consequences of their sin! Honest-hearted reception of the Word of God can alone preserve us from such ignorance. (*B. W. Newton.*) *Man's incompetency to deal with sin*:—Nothing can more forcibly express man's incompetency to deal with sin than the fact of there being such a thing as a "sin of ignorance." How could he deal with that which he knows not? How could he dispose of that which has never even come within the range of his conscience? Impossible. Man's ignorance of sin proves his total inability to put it away. If he does not know of it, what can he do about it? Nothing. He is as powerless as he is ignorant. Nor is this all. The fact of a "sin of ignorance" demonstrates, most clearly, the uncertainty which must attend upon every settlement of the question of sin, in which no higher claims have been responded to than those put forth by the most refined human conscience. There can never be settled peace upon this ground. There will always be the painful apprehension that there is something wrong underneath. If the heart be not led into settled repose by the Scripture testimony that the inflexible claims of Divine justice have been answered, there must of necessity be a sensation of uneasiness, and every such sensation presents a barrier to our worship, our communion, and our testin omy. If I am uneasy in reference to the settlement of the question of sin, I cannot worship; I cannot enjoy communion, either with God or His people, nor can I be an intelligent or effective witness for Christ. The heart must be at rest, before God, as to the perfect remission of sin, ere we can "worship Him in spirit and in truth." If there be guilt on the conscience there must be terror in the heart; and assuredly a heart filled with terror cannot be a happy or a worshipping heart. (*C. H. Mackintosh.*) *The Bible tells of sin and its cure*:—The Bible is a book with a single purpose; and that purpose is to reveal the sinfulness of the human family, and a method of salvation from that sinfulness. And, of course, a book that has only one end in view must necessarily be silent with reference to a thousand other subjects. A few years ago a man was galloping on horseback, as if he had seen a spectre, down the bank of a New England river in the dead of night. His mission was to inform the sleeping dwellers in a number of manufacturing towns farther down the stream that the great dam further up the river was about to burst its barriers. The horseman, as he sped along, trampled myriads of flowers underfoot, but he had nothing to say of botany. He rushed by hundreds of projecting rocks, rich in stories of prehistoric ages, but he had nothing to say on the subject of geology. Over his head the starry hosts were marshalled as they had been since the foundation of the world, but he had nothing to say on the subject of astronomy. He had just one mission—to inform the sleeping toilers of their danger, and how they might escape it, and he had no time to devote to the consideration of any other subject, however important, or however fascinating to other minds. So it is with God's Word. Its single object is to tell us of sin and its cure. On this subject it is full and explicit and infallible. *Involuntary offences*:—"Truth, real inward truth, is the rarest of all things." Thus wrote the late Rev. F. D. Maurice, one of the most saintly men of his day. Let him who questions this consider this good man's confession, that "some little petty subterfuge, some verbal or acted dishonesty, we are continually surprised into; and against this neither a high code of honour nor an exact profession of religion is much preservation." Does the reader see in this confession, as in a mirror, his own heart? If so, and if he would know how to become absolutely truthful, let him learn that "continued intercourse with the Father of Lights, revealing our own darkness to us, is the one safeguard; and the Christian who loses that is in more danger of stumbling than an infidel." Perhaps not in more, but certainly in as much danger; since when a Christian runs from the light into darkness he is blind as other men. To be thoroughly truthful in all things, it is, therefore, needful for a good man to live very near to the God of truth. Our virtues are never so pure as when we live close to our Redeemer's throne. *Errors and oversights in all our lives*:—It is with the children of men as with the housewife, that having diligently swept her house and cast the dust out-of-doors, can see nothing amiss,

not so much as a speck of dust in it, whereas, if the sun do but a little shine in through some cranny in the wall, or some broken quarrel in the window, she may soon see the whole house swim and swarm with innumerable motes of dust, floating to and fro in the air, which for dimness of light or sight before she was not able to discern. Even so it is with many that are careful of their ways, so that little may be seen amiss that might require either reformation or amendment, yet, when they shall come to look more attentively into God's law, a little beam of light reflecting upon their souls from it, will discover unto them such an innumerable company, as well of corruptions in their hearts as of errors and oversights in their lives, that it shall make them, as men amazed, cry out, Lord, what earthly man doth know the errors of his life? (*T. Gataker.*) *The best are not free from imperfection:—* He who boasts of being perfect is perfect in folly. I have been a good deal up and down the world, and I neither did see either a perfect horse or a perfect man, and I never shall until two Sundays come together. You cannot get white flour out of a coal sack, nor perfection out of human nature; he who looks for it had better look for sugar in the sea. The old saying is, "Lifeless, faultless." Of dead men we should say nothing but good; but as for the living, they are all tarred, more or less, with the black brush, and half an eye can see it. Every head has a soft place in it, and every heart has its black drop. Every rose has its prickles, and every day its night. Even the sun shows spots, and the skies are darkened with clouds. Nobody is so wise but he has folly enough to stock a stall at Vanity Fair. Where I could not see the fool's cap, I have, nevertheless, heard the bells jingle. As there is no sunshine without some shadow, so is all human good mixed up with more or less evil; even poor law guardians have their little failings, and parish beadies are not wholly of heavenly nature. The best wine has its lees. All men's faults are not written on their foreheads, and it is quite as well they are not, or hats would need wide brims; yet, as sure as eggs are eggs, faults of some sort nestle in every man's bosom. There's no telling when a man's sins may show themselves, for hares pop out of a ditch just when you are not looking for them. A horse that is weak in the legs may not stumble for a mile or two, but it's in him, and the rider had better hold him up well. The tabby cat is not lapping milk just now, but leave the dairy door open, and we will see if she is not as had a thief as the kitten. There's fire in the flint, cool as it looks; wait till the steel gets a knock at it, and you will see. Everybody can read that riddle, but it is not everybody that will remember to keep his gunpowder out of the way of the candle. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *All sin must be abhorred:—*It is credibly reported that in some parts of Italy there are spiders of so poisonous a nature as will kill him that treads upon them, and break a glass if they do but creep over it. This shows clearly that the force of this poison is not in measure by the quantity, but in the nature by the quality thereof. And even so the force of sin consists not in the greatness of the subject or object of it, but in the poisonous nature of it, for that it is the breach of the law, violation of the justice, and a provocation of the wrath of God, and is a present poison and damnation to men's souls; therefore, as the least poison, as poison, being deadly to the body, is detested, so the least sin, as sin, being mortal to the soul, is to be abhorred. (*J. Spencer.*)

Ver. 3. If the priest that is anointed do sin.—*The eminent sinfulness of error in the priest:—*I. FROM THE SUPERIOR POSITION HE OCCUPIED. II. FROM THE SUPERIOR PRIVILEGES HE ENJOYED. Exempt from many secular anxieties and temptations. Constantly in contact with sacred influences. III. FROM THE SUPERIOR KNOWLEDGE HE POSSESSED. Intimately acquainted with requirements of law. Possessing ample means and opportunities for ascertaining purpose of precepts enjoined. IV. FROM THE SUPERIOR INFLUENCE HE EXERTED. Looked up to as an example. (*F. W. Brown.*) *Defiled sanctities:—*1. Christians occupying exalted positions, enjoying elevated privileges, rendering distinguished service for God, may fall into sin. 2. They know that the dishonour done to God is commensurate with the dignity of their position and the holiness of their profession. 3. So acutely is their guilt felt by them when thus brought under consciousness of sin, that its burden and bitterness would overwhelm them were there not adequate grace in the sin-offering for even such sin as theirs. Here, therefore, it is clearly shown—I. THAT HOWEVER FAR SIN MAY HAVE PENETRATED, AND WHATEVER SOLEMN AND SACRED THINGS IT MAY HAVE DEFILED, THITHER THE ATONING BLOOD FOLLOWS, CARRYING FULL EXPIATION WHERE SIN HAS CARRIED DEFILEMENT. II. THAT THE DISHONOUR DONE TO GOD, TO THE SANCTITIES OF A GODLY LIFE, AND TO THE SOLEMNITIES OF SANCTUARY MINISTRIES, WAS COMPENSATED

FOR IN OFFERING UPON THE ALTAR OF INCENSE THE SYMBOLS OF THE INHERENT AND INTRINSIC EXCELLENCY OF CHRIST. (*W. H. Jellie.*) *Sin in the priesthood*.—I. A HOLY OFFICE DOES NOT ENSURE INFALLIBILITY. II. OCCUPANTS OF A HOLY OFFICE ARE SPECIALLY CALLED TO SANCTITY. III. EMINENTLY PRIVILEGED AND ENLIGHTENED, THEY WHO MINISTER BEFORE GOD SHOULD BE MOST VIGILANT LEST THEY SIN. IV. SIN IN GOD'S PRIESTS HAD TO BE PURGED BY A GREAT SACRIFICIAL EXPIATION. Expressing—1. The peculiar magnitude of sin in them. 2. The boundless sufficiency of redemption, even for them. (*Ibid.*) *The priest's sin*.—This man is a priest; the holy anointing oil of the Lord his God is upon him, and therefore, of course, he cannot sin! The fact of the matter is that none of us are beyond the reach of temptation, beyond the possibility of a fall. Well, what then? I know what the mocking world will say: "If the priest that is anointed do sin," I will have nothing to do with religion at all; it is all hypocrisy; he is no better than other men. I know quite well what uncharitable professors will say: Turn him out; he is a hypocrite. "If the priest that is anointed do sin," he has disgraced himself. I know what your own heart will say: It is no good; I have tried; I have fallen; I may as well give it all up, there is no hope at all. But what does God say? "If the priest that is anointed do sin," let him bring his sacrifice; "let him bring . . . a young bullock without blemish . . . for a sin-offering." Is it not marvellous! I do not so much wonder at the 27th verse where God says: "If any one of the common people sin," but "if the priest that is anointed do sin," let him bring his sacrifice. And yet, if you read that verse carefully all through, you will see that there is no minimising of the priest's sin. God, in the terms that He uses, says that it is a very heinous thing for a priest to sin. If one of His own children goes astray it is a very serious thing. He has been anointed; that anointing not only implies separation to God, but enduing with power. That anointing of the Holy Spirit is upon him, he ought not to have sinned. No temptation came upon him more than he was able to bear. And if you read on you will see, in the Revised Version, "If the priest that is anointed do sin, so as to cause the people to sin." Yes, if the priest sin, he causes the people to sin, and if the Christian sin he is a stumblingblock to others, therefore an ungodly man will go still further into the depths of sin. And yet, "if the priest that is anointed do sin, let him bring his sacrifice." What does he do when he sacrifices? There are seven points you ought to consider. The first thing he has to do (ver. 4), "He shall bring the bullock unto the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord, and shall lay his hand upon the bullock's head." The bullock is to be without spot or blemish. The priest comes there conscious of his own sin, and lays his hand upon the bullock's head. And that is the first thing you must do. You must find a spotless victim. The Lord Jesus Christ is that Lamb without sin, without spot. The first thing to do is to put our hand upon the victim. And the moment the man laid his hand upon the victim that moment a transference took place. All the sinner's sin was placed upon the victim. The victim was slain and cast outside the camp, and the sinner goes into the Temple of God and takes his place in the Holy Place of Jehovah. And directly you lay the hand of faith upon Christ, directly you grasp Christ as your great Substitute, the same thing takes place. And if you are a child of God, you have felt that the burden of sin is intolerable, it has weighed you down, and all that sin has been made to meet upon Him. Another reason why he was to lay his hand hard, was to show that all his trust was in that victim alone. He was to lean hard with all his weight upon him. If the victim did not support him the man fell prostrate to the ground. So we must lean entirely upon Christ, all our confidence must be in Him and Him alone. The second point is this—He shall kill the bullock before the Lord. There is no doubt about it, "the wages of sin is death." Look at it! look priest! and see what your sin has brought about—the death of that pure and spotless victim. Now there were three things to be done with the blood of the bullock. The blood of the bullock was to be taken and sprinkled in three different places. First of all you read in ver. 6, the priest was to take the blood and sprinkle it seven times before the Lord, before the veil of the sanctuary. Seven times he was to sprinkle it there at the Holy of Holies. Why? Because within that Holy of Holies dwell the Shechinah glory of God. Christian, is this not the first result of your sin? You lose your communion with God. The first thing to be done is to restore that communion with God. The next thing to be done is this—he was to take some of the blood (ver. 7) and put it upon the altar of sweet incense. What was that? The place where the priest prayed for the people. When the people were praying outside the priest went into the Holy Place, and his offering went up as incense

before God. Is not this the second result of sin—you lose the power of prayer; you say your prayers but you no longer pray; you lose all that joy and spontaneity of service; there is no fragrance about your prayers, it is mere routine, and there is no reality about them at all. If you want to have communion with God in prayer, and to be able to pray as you ought to pray, there must be the sprinkling of the blood there. The third thing to be done was to take the rest of the blood and pour it out on the altar of burnt-offering. What was that? The place where the daily burnt-offering was offered up. God will not accept your burnt-offering if there is sin in the heart. There is a controversy between me and God, and though I may try and bring Him offerings, God will not accept them. There was another thing to be done. "And the skin of the bullock, and all his flesh, with his head, and with his legs, and his inwards, and his dung, even the whole bullock shall he carry forth without the camp unto a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn him on the wood with fire: where the ashes are poured out shall he be burnt." Now we have never had that word for burnt before. That word means to thoroughly consume with burning. Very different to another word for burning I shall notice presently. It is no use your saying you cannot get peace and joy as long as you are keeping your bullock within the camp. You must take it out and burn it. There will be no peace until you do. Inside the camp a very different scene was taking place. There, upon the altar, we read in the eighth and following verses, all the fat of the bullock, all the inwards of the bullock, he is to offer it up upon the altar of the burnt-offering for a sweet savour to God. That is a very different word from burnt—the word in ver. 10, is *k'tour*; it means to burn as fragrance—not with consuming burning, but as sweet incense to God. And there is a sweet incense ascending from that altar. The priest may almost hear that whisper from the open heavens, and it is forgiven him. It is all forgiven; the sacrifice is accepted, and the sin is blotted out. (*E. A. Stuart, M.A.*) *Sin in ministers*:—The high priest, although a single individual, if he sin, must bring as large and valuable an offering as is required from the whole congregation. For this law there are two evident reasons. The first is found in the fact that in Israel the high priest represented before God the entire nation. When he sinned it was as if the whole nation sinned in him. So it is said that by his sin he "brings guilt on the people"—a very weighty matter. And this suggests a second reason for the costly offering that was required from him. The consequences of the sin of one in such a high position of religious authority must, in the nature of the case, be much more serious and far-reaching than in the case of any other person. And here we have a lesson as pertinent to our time as to those days. As the high priest, so, in modern time, the bishop, minister, or elder, is ordained as an officer in matters of religion, to act for and with men in the things of God. For the proper administration of this high trust, how indispensable that such a one shall take heed to maintain unbroken fellowship with God! Any shortcoming here is sure to impair by so much the spiritual value of his own ministrations for the people to whom he ministers. And this evil consequence of any unfaithfulness of his is the more certain to follow, because, of all the members of the community, his example has the widest and most effective influence; in whatever that example be bad or defective, it is sure to do mischief in exact proportion to his exalted station. If, then, such a one sin, the case is very grave, and his guilt proportionately heavy. (*S. H. Kellogg, D.D.*) *Sin not excused by ignorance*:—One would wonder whether it is possible that sin can be committed in ignorance—that is to say, whether the ignorance does not do away with the sinful character of the deed. Is not sin a wilful action? Is not its wilfulness the very essence of its guilt? So we would think; yet again and again in the ritual we find that ignorance is never made into a sufficient excuse for sin. The sense of mystery which we may feel in regard to this matter can only be relieved by looking for analogous instances in the field of nature. There is no law written on all the dominion of nature with a broader and clearer hand than that all sin is followed by penalty. Exclude the air, and you exclude vitality; shut out the light, and you impoverish the life; doom yourself to solitude, and you doom yourself by the same fiat to extinction. It is in vain to plead that we did not know the nature of air, or the utility of light, or the influence of high things upon things that are low; we must be taught the depth of our ignorance and its guilt by the intensity and continuance of our personal suffering. Leaving the region of nature and coming into the region of civilisation, we find that even in legal affairs violations of law are not excused on the ground of ignorance. The judge upon the bench does not hesitate to inform the trespasser that he ought to have known the law of which he

pleaded ignorance. Turning from purely legal criticism of this kind, we find the same law in operation in social affairs. A man is not excused from the consequences of ill-behaviour on the ground that he did not know the customs of society or the technicalities of etiquette. He may be pitied, he may be held in a kind of mild contempt, his name may be used to point a moral; but at the root of all this criticism lies the law that the man is a trespasser, and that ignorance cannot be pleaded as a complete excuse. This canon of judgment has a very wide bearing upon human affairs. Were it to be justly and completely applied, it would alter many arrangements and relations of life. There are many things which we ought to know, and which we ought to be; and instead of excusing ourselves by our ignorance, we should be stimulated by its effects to keener inquiry and more diligent culture. That sense of ignorance will possibly show us in what critical conditions our life is being spent. What watchfulness is imposed upon us by the fact that it is possible to sin through ignorance! If sin were a mere act of violence, we could easily become aware of it, and with comparatively little difficulty we might avoid its repetition. But it is more and other than this. It is committed when we little think of its commission; we inflict wounds when we think our hands are free of all weapons and instruments; we dishonour God when we suppose we are merely silent about Him. Neglect may be sin as well as violence. There is a negative criminality as well as a positive blasphemy. All this makes life most critical and most profoundly solemn. The commandment of God is exceeding broad. Being a Divine commandment it comes of continual and minute exactions covering all life with the spirit and obligation of discipline. The mercy is shown that a special offering was provided for the sin of ignorance. . . . Let every soul, then, boldly say, as if in solemn monologue, Whatever my sin may be, it is provided for in the great Offering established as the way of access to the Father; I will invent no excuses; I will seek for no new methods of payment or compensation; I will bring no price in my hand, no excuse on my tongue, nor will I hide even in the depths of my consciousness any hope that I can vindicate my position before God; I will simply fall into the hands of the Living One, and look upon the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. In that spirit I will go forward to judgment, and in that spirit I will encounter the mysteries of destiny. (*J. Parker, D.D.*)

Vers. 6, 7. Sprinkle of the blood.—*The sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifice*:—There is not that intensity of evil in a sin of ignorance which is to be seen in wilful transgression; but still there is sin in it: for no law can allow ignorance to be an excuse for trespass, since it is the duty of the subject to know the law. No amount of sincerity can turn injustice to righteousness, or transform falsehood into truth. If a man partakes of a deadly poison believing it to be a health-giving medicine, his sincerity will not hinder the natural course of nature: he will die in his error. It is precisely so in the moral and spiritual world. Sins committed in ignorance must be still sins in the sight of the Lord, or else no expiation would have been provided for them. I am greatly rejoiced to think there should be such a sacrifice provided, since it may yet turn out that the larger number of our sins are sins of which we have not been aware, because the hardness of our heart has prevented our discovering our error. Many good men have lived in an evil habit, and remained in it unto death, and yet have not known it to be evil. Now, if the precious blood of Jesus only put away the sin which we perceived in detail, its efficacy would be limited by the enlightenment of our conscience, and therefore some grievous sin might be overlooked and prove our ruin. "Cleanse Thou me from secret faults" is a prayer to which the expiation of Christ is a full answer. The atonement acts according to God's sight of sin and not according to our sight of it, for we only see it in part, but God sees it all and blots it all out. I. We begin with THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST IN ITS RELATION TO THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL. 1. In the type before us the prominent thing before God is the blood of atonement. It was God's intent to awaken in man a great disgust of sin, by making him see that it could only be put away by suffering and death. In the Tabernacle in the wilderness almost everything was sanctified by blood. The purple drops fell even on the book, and all the people. The blood was to be seen everywhere. 2. The blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled before the veil seven times, signifying this: first, that the atonement made by the blood of Jesus is perfect in its reference to God. All through the Scriptures, as you well know, seven is the number of perfection, and in this place it is doubtless used with that intent. The seven times is the same as once for all: it conveys the same meaning

as when we read, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins," and again, "We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once." It is a complete act. No man need bring anything more, or anything of his own, wherewith to turn away the anger of God; but he may come just as he is, guilty and defiled, and plead this precious blood which has made effectual atonement for him. 3. Note next, that not only is the atonement itself perfect, but that the presentation of that atonement is perfect, too. The sevenfold sprinkling was typical of Christ as a Priest presenting unto the Father Himself as a sacrifice for sin. This has been fully done. Jesus has in due order carried the propitiation into the sanctuary, and appeared in the presence of God on our behalf. We now pass on to a few thoughts about ourselves in relation to the type. 4. This sevenfold sprinkling of the blood upon the veil meant that the way of our access to God is only by virtue of the precious blood of Christ. Do you ever feel a veil hanging between you and God? In very truth, there is none; for Jesus has taken it away through His flesh. 5. I further think that the blood was sprinkled on the veil seven times to show that a deliberate contemplation of the death of Christ is greatly for our benefit. Whatever else you treat slightly, let the sacrifice of Calvary be seriously considered again and again. 6. Remember, too, that this sets out how great our guilt has been, since the blood must be sprinkled seven times ere the work of atonement is fully seen by you. Our guilt has a sevenfold blackness about it, and there must be a sevenfold cleansing. If you plead the blood of Jesus once and you do not obtain peace thereby, plead it again; and if still the burden lies upon your heart, still go on pleading with the Lord the one prevailing argument that Jesus bled. God, who bids us forgive unto seventy times seven, sets no bound to His own forgiveness. 7. Do reflect that if your case seems to yourself to be very difficult, it is provided for by this sevenfold sprinkling of the blood. The devil's desire will be to keep you from thinking upon Christ; but do remember that thoughts about anything else will do you very little good. Your hope lies in thinking upon Jesus, not upon yourself. "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." Mr. Moody Stuart somewhere tells us that he once talked with a woman who was in great trouble about her sins. She was a well-instructed person, and knew the Bible thoroughly, so that he was in a little difficulty what to say to her, as she was so accustomed to all-saving truth. At last he urged upon her very strongly that passage, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners," and he noticed that she seemed to find a quiet relief in a gentle flow of tears. He prayed with her, and when she rose from her knees she seemed much comforted. Meeting her the next day, and seeing her smiling face, and finding her full of rest in the Lord, he asked, "What was it wrought your deliverance?" "Oh," she said, "it was that text, 'Jesus came to save sinners.'" "Did you not know that before?" said Mr. Stuart. Yes, she knew the words before, but she found that in her heart of hearts she had believed that Jesus came to save saints, and not sinners. Do not many awakened persons abide in the same error? II. THE BLOOD IN ITS INFLUENCE UPON PRAYER. "The priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the Lord." Horns signify power, and the explanation of the symbol is that there is no power in intercessory prayer apart from the blood of expiation. 1. Remember, first, that the intercession of Christ Himself is based upon His atonement. He is daily pleading before the throne of God, and His great argument is that He offered Himself without spot unto God. "It pleased the Father to bruise Him," and now it pleases the Father to hear Him. The bruised spices of His passion are an incense of sweet smell, and derive a double acceptance from the blood-smeared altar upon which they are presented. And now take the type to yourselves. 2. You and I are to offer incense upon this golden altar by our daily intercession for others, but our plea must always be the atoning blood of Jesus. 3. And, as this must be the plea of our intercession, so it must be our impulse in making intercession. When we pray we come, as it were, to this golden altar, and we look thereon: what is that we see? Stains of blood! We look again, and again see crimson spots, while all the four horns are red with blood. Did my Lord pour out His soul unto death for men, and shall not I pour out my soul in living earnest when I pray? Can you now bow your knee to plead with God and not feel your heart set upon the good of men, when you see that your Lord has laid down His life that they may be saved? Where He poured out His blood, will not you pour out your tears? He has given His bleeding heart for men, will not you give your pleading lips? 4. I think, too, I must say that

this smearing of the horns of the altar with blood is meant to give us very great encouragement and assurance whenever we come to God in prayer. Never give anybody up, however bad he may be. Why, there is the blood of Christ. What sin is there which it cannot remove? When we pray, let us with vehement desire plead the blood of Jesus Christ. Perhaps fewer petitions, and more urging of the merit of Christ, would make better prayers. III. The last point is, **THE BLOOD IN ITS INFLUENCE UPON ALL OUR SERVICE.** You see we have been coming outwards from the veil to the golden altar, and now we pass outside the Holy Place into the outer court, and there in the open air stands the great brazen altar—the first object that the Israelite saw when he entered the sacred precincts. 1. That altar represents a great many things, and among the rest our Lord Jesus presenting Himself to God as an acceptable sacrifice. Whenever you think of our Lord as being an offering of a sweet smell unto God, never dissociate that fact in your mind from His being slain for sin, for all our Lord's service is tinged by His atoning death. 2. Viewing the type in reference to ourselves, let us learn that whenever we come to offer any sacrifice unto the Lord we must take care that we present it by virtue of the precious blood of Christ. We must view the atonement as connected with every holy thing. I believe that our testimonies for God will be blessed of God in proportion as we keep the sacrifice of Christ to the forefront. Somebody asked our brother, Mr. Moody, how it was that he was so successful, and he is said to have replied, "Well, if I must tell you, it is I believe because we come out fair and square upon the doctrine of substitution." In that remark he hit the nail on the head. That is the saving doctrine; keep that before your own mind, keep it before the minds of those whom you would benefit. 3. And, beloved, do you not think that this pouring of the blood at the foot of this brazen altar indicates to us how much we ought to bring there? If Jesus has brought His life there, and laid Himself thereon, ought we not to bring all that we are and all that we have, and consecrate all to God? 4. Lastly, you notice the blood was poured out at the bottom of the altar. What could that mean but this—that the altar of thank-offering stood upon and grew out of a basis of blood. So all our deeds for God, our sacrifices for His cause, must spring out of the love which He has manifested in the death of His dear Son. We love Him because He first loved us. And how do we know that He loves us? Behold the death of Jesus as the surest proof. I long to put my whole being upon that altar, and I should feel as I did so that I was not giving my God anything, but only rendering to Him what His dear Son has bought a million times over by once shedding His life-blood. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Burn all sin*:—The blood was put upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense to signify that no prayer can pierce up to God but in and by the blood of Christ. All the rest of the blood was poured at the foot of the altar of burnt-offering, to note still the true shedding of Christ's blood for mankind, and because also it was holy, it might not be cast out as profane. The burning of the holy without the host plainly showed that Christ should not suffer in Jerusalem, but should be led out of the city to a place appointed, and there suffer; which you know was fulfilled accordingly (Heb. xiii. 11, 12). And the whole bullock was to be burned, being a sin-offering, to teach men to burn all their sins, and not to divide them, as we do, when we say, I will amend my drunkenness, but I cannot leave my swearing, or if I leave that also, yet my licentious life a little more must have a swing, &c. But burn all, thou wert best, and willingly keep none, burn them, I say, by true sorrow and detestation of them, even all, all, lest but one—being wilfully still delighted in—burn thee all, and wholly in hell for ever. When Moses, with the Israelites, was to depart out of Egypt, and Pharaoh would have had them leave their cattle behind them, saving what they intended to sacrifice, answer was made, they would not leave one hoof of a beast behind; and so deal you with your sins—leave not one hoof of sin behind. No one sin, no part of sin, that is, still I say, by wittingly, willingly, and boldly continuing in it and delighting in it. Otherwise, free from sin in this life we cannot be. But, through the grace of God, we may be free from presumptuous pleasure in sin, and sigh and groan no more, for that any way we should offend so good a God, as we find infinite ways of Him that we do offend, desiring and longing to be free even from all sin. (*Bp. Babington.*) *Sprinkling the blood*:—Ewald thus explains the various ceremonies of sprinkling: "It was in the sprinkling of the blood, the proper sacrament of sacrifice, that the distinction between the guilt-offering and the expiatory offering in the narrow sense came most clearly to the front: and it is easy to understand why it would reveal itself most plainly here. As it was right that the blood of an expiatory offering for public transgressions should be made far more

conspicuous to eyes and sense, so it was sprinkled on an elevated place, or even on one which was extraordinarily sacred. The way, too, in which this was done was marked by three stages. If the atonement was made for an ordinary man or for a prince the priest sprinkled the blood against the high towering horns of the outer altar, and poured the remainder, as usual, out at its base; if it was made for the community or for the high priest, some of the blood was seven times sprinkled against the veil of the Holy of Holies, then some more against the horns of the inner altar, and only what was then left was poured out as usual at the base of the outer altar. The third and highest expiation was adopted on the yearly Day of Atonement. On the other hand, in the case of the guilt-offering no reason existed for adopting any unusual mode of sprinkling the blood. It was sprinkled, just as in other cases, round the sides and foot of the outer altar. As soon as this most sacred ceremony of the sprinkling was completed, then, according to the ancient belief, the impurity and guilt were already shaken off from the object to which they had clung."

Substitution satisfying the conscience :—In Passion week as I was reading "Bishop Wilson on the Lord's Supper," I met with an expression to this effect, that—The Jews knew what they did when they transferred their sin to the head of their offering. The thought rushed into my mind, What! may I transfer all my guilt to another? Has God provided an offering for me that I may lay all my sins on His head? Then, God willing, I will not bear them on my own soul one moment longer. Accordingly I sought to lay my sins upon the sacred head of Jesus; and on the Wednesday began to have a hope of mercy; on the Thursday that hope increased, on the Friday and Saturday it became more strong, and on Easter Sunday I awoke early, with these words upon my heart and lips, "Jesus Christ is risen to-day! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!" From that hour peace flowed in rich abundance unto my soul. (C. Simeon.)

Repentance insufficient without atonement.—1. Some tell us that repentance is sufficient without atonement. "Contrition," say they, "is all that God wants. Why insist on the need of sacrifice? Let a man mourn over his iniquities and he will be forgiven." This is a mode of speech not more unscriptural than unphilosophical. To maintain that "repentance is sufficient without atonement" is uncommonly like declaring that life is enough without bread or that heat is sufficient without the sun. The fact is, that as existence is sustained by food, and as warmth proceeds from the orb of day, so repentance is with most men the result of belief in redemption. John the Baptist was pre-eminently a preacher of repentance: we invariably associate the two. "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"; such was the keynote of his teaching. He bids the Pharisees and Sadducees "bring forth fruit meet for repentance." Yet he who thus spoke took care to cry, "Behold the Lamb of God." 2. "Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," stand in the relation of effect and cause. The executioner of Socrates, handing him the cup of hemlock, burst into tears, deeply grieved that he should, in any way, be an accessory to the death of one so illustrious. In like manner, when we hear a well-known voice exclaiming, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me," we are conscious that our transgressions necessitated the fatal draught, and, feeling their enormity, we mourn over them. Some years ago patriotic regard for their country introduced the following fashion among Polish ladies. Each wore a small iron cross bearing upon it the name "Warsaw." Thereby they were reminded of the wrong done to the nation which they loved so well, and thereby, also, they sought to stir up brothers, husbands, and sons to hatred of tyrannic Russia. Let us have the Cross near our hearts, for nothing will so effectually inflame animosity against sin. Aptly has it been remarked that "contrition is the tear in the eye of faith." (T. R. Stevenson.)

Vers. 11, 12. *The whole bullock shall he carry forth.—Why the skin, flesh, and other parts of the bullock was carried out of the host*:—1. The legal reason was because it was a sacrifice for sin, and therefore unmeet to be burnt as other sacrifices upon the altar. 2. The historical reason, because the Lord suffered without the gate of the city. 3. The moral reason, to show that the skin with the flesh was carried forth so the priest should be far off, not only from sin, but the occasion thereof. 4. The mystical reason, that Christ doth cast out-of-doors, and remove far away from us our sins. 5. Now further, the sin-offering for the priest, and for the whole congregation were burnt without, to show the horror and greatness of their sin; and though it were unclean, being a sacrifice for sin, yet because some part thereof, namely the fat, was burnt upon the altar, the remaining part was

with reverence to be burned, and in a clean place, and therefore without the camp, because it was separated from the common pollutions which might happen within the camp. 6. The Hebrews further observe that the high priest's sin-offering was commanded to be burnt openly without the camp, to the end that no man might be ashamed to confess his sin. (*A. Willet, D.D.*) *To bear patiently the momentary afflictions of this life* :—Whereas ver. 12, the bullock was to be carried out of the host, the apostle applieth it to Christ suffering without the gate, making this further use of it—"Let us go forth therefore out of the camp, bearing His reproach, for we have no continuing city" (Heb. xiii. 13). We should in our meditation and desire go out of the world as out of the camp, and be content to bear reproach for Christ's sake, seeing we shall have no long continuance here, but look for an everlasting habitation in heaven; by this reason taken from the shortness of our afflictions the apostle exhorteth thus (2 Cor. iv. 17). The imitation of the saints, shortness of time, fragility of the body do persuade to perseverance, nature hath well provided that grief if it be great cannot be long, for a short danger thou shalt receive an everlasting reward. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 13-21. *If the whole congregation . . . sin.—Responsibility of communities and nations* :—Israel was taught by this law, as we are, that responsibility attaches not only to each individual person, but also to associations of individuals in their corporate character, as nations, communities, and—we may add—all societies and corporations, whether secular or religious. Never has a generation needed this reminder more than our own. The political and social principles which, since the French Revolution in the end of last century, have been, year by year, more and more generally accepted among the nations of Christendom, are every where tending to the avowed or practical denial of this most important truth. It is a maxim ever more and more extensively accepted as almost axiomatic in our modern democratic communities, that religion is wholly a concern of the individual; and that a nation or community, as such, should make no distinction between various religions as false or true, but maintain an absolute neutrality, even between Christianity and idolatry, or theism and atheism. It should take little thought to see that this modern maxim stands in direct opposition to the principle assumed in this law of the sin-offering; namely, that a community or nation is as truly and directly responsible to God as the individual in the nation. But this corporate responsibility the spirit of the age squarely denies. Not that all indeed, in our modern so-called Christian nations have come to this. But no one will deny that this is the mind of the vanguard of nineteenth-century liberalism in religion and politics. Many of our political leaders in all lands make no secret of their views on the subject. A purely secular state is everywhere held up, and that with great plausibility and persuasiveness, as the ideal of political government; the goal to the attainment of which all good citizens should unite their efforts. It is not strange, indeed, to see atheists, agnostics, and others who deny the Christian faith, maintaining this position; but when we hear men who call themselves Christians—in many cases, even Christian ministers—advocating, in one form or another, governmental neutrality in religion, as the only right basis of government, one may well be amazed. Will any one venture to say that this teaching of the law of the sin-offering was only intended, like the offering itself, for the old Hebrews? Is it not rather the constant and most emphatic teaching of the whole Scriptures, that God dealt with all the ancient Gentile nations on the same principle? The history which records the overthrow of those old nations and empires does so, even professedly, for the express purpose of calling the attention of men in all ages to this principle, that God deals with all nations as under obligation to recognise Himself as King of nations, and submit in all things to His authority. So it was in the case of Moab, of Ammon, of Nineveh, and Babylon; in regard to each of which we are told, in so many words, that it was because they refused to recognise this principle of national responsibility to the one true God, which was brought before Israel in this part of the law of the sin-offering, that the Divine judgment came upon them in their utter national overthrow. How awfully plain, again, is the language of the second Psalm on this subject, where it is precisely this national repudiation of the supreme authority of God and of His Christ, so increasingly common in our day, which is named as the ground of the derisive judgment of God, and is made the occasion of exhorting all nations, not merely to belief in God, but also to the obedient recognition of His only-begotten Son, the Messiah, as the only possible means of escaping the future kindling of His wrath. (*S. H. Kellogg, D.D.*)

Multitude no excuse for offence:—Note how a multitude of offenders excuseth no offence: but if even the whole congregation should sin through ignorance, yet a sin-offering must be offered by them all, and their number yieldeth no excuse. Great was the number of sinners when God sent the flood, but their number defended them not. So in Sodom and Gomorrah the offenders were many. Ten tribes of twelve fell away from God and became idolaters. Broad is the way that leadeth to hell, and many find it, going to hell, though they be many, &c. Secondly, observe with yourself the praise (hid from your eyes) and see the state of many a man and woman do evil. The matter is hid from their eyes in God's anger, and albeit they lie at the pit's brink of destruction, yet they see it not, feel it not, are not troubled with it. Because, indeed, they never sit and take an account of themselves and their works, laying them to the rule of the word: which if they did, conscience would quickly bite and spy, and speak of a misdoing. The godly do this at last, and therefore you see it here in your chapter, a time of knowing to them, as there was a time of hiding. Pray we ever for this grace, that we sleep not in death: I mean in sin, that leadeth to death, but that we may awake and stand up from the dead, and Jesus Christ vouchsafe us light, to amendment of life, and eternal comfort and safety. (*Bp. Babington*.)

Some difference between the sacrifice of the priest and that of the people:—1. It is said when the sin which they have committed is known this was not rehearsed before in the sacrifice of the priest to show that the priests for the most part do sin wittingly, but the people through ignorance. 2. In the other sacrifice the priest alone was to put his hand upon the head of the sacrifice; but here the elders are to lay on their hands both in their own name and of all the people. 3. Here is added ver. 20, and the priest shall make atonement for them, which was not expressed before, because the priest before offered sacrifice for his own sin, and so could not be a mediator for himself. Herein the priest interceding for the people was a type of Christ who is the only effectual Intercessor both for sin of priest and people. 4. This congregation here offending may represent the synagogue of the Jews who put Christ to death, crying, "Crucify Him"; but they did it of ignorance as St. Peter saith: "and now I know, brethren, that through ignorance ye did it," and as here a sacrifice is appointed after the people came to the knowledge of their sin, so there St. Peter exhorteth the people to acknowledge and confess their sin, "repent and turn, that your sins may be put away"; and as here the elders put their hands upon the sacrifice, so the elders, rulers, and governors, had their hand in Christ's death. (*A. Willet, D.D.*)

Vers. 22-26. When a ruler hath sinned.—A lesson for politicians:—While there are many in our parliaments and like governing bodies in Christendom who cast their every vote with the fear of God before their eyes, yet, if there be any truth in the general opinion of men upon this subject, there are many in such places who, in their voting, have before their eyes the fear of party more than the fear of God; and who, when a question comes before them, first of all consider, not what would the law of absolute righteousness, the law of God, require, but how will a vote, one way or the other, in this matter, be likely to affect their party? Such certainly need to be emphatically reminded of this part of the law of the sin-offering, which held the civil ruler specially responsible to God for the execution of his trust. For so it is still; God has not abdicated His throne in favour of the people, nor will He waive His crown-rights out of deference to the political necessities of a party. Nor is it only those who sin in this particular way who need the reminder of their personal responsibility to God. All need it who either are or may be called to places of greater or less governmental responsibility; and it is those who are the most worthy of such trust who will be the first to acknowledge their need of this warning. For in all times those who have been lifted to positions of political power have been under peculiar temptation to forget God, and become reckless of their obligation to Him as His ministers. But under the conditions of modern life, in many countries of Christendom, this is true as perhaps never before. For now it has come to pass that, in most modern communities, those who make and execute laws hold their tenure of office at the pleasure of a motley army of voters, Protestants and Romanists, Jews, atheists, and what not, a large part of whom care not the least for the will of God in civil government, as revealed in Scripture. Under such conditions, the place of the civil ruler becomes one of such special trial and temptation that we do well to remember in our intercessions, with peculiar sympathy, all who in such positions are seeking to serve supremely, not their party but their God, and so best

serve their country. It is no wonder that the temptation too often to many becomes overpowering to silence conscience with plausible sophistries, and to use their office to carry out in legislation, instead of the will of God, the will of the people, or, rather, of that particular party which put them in power. Yet the great principle affirmed in this law of the sin-offering stands, and will stand for ever, and to it all will do well to take heed; namely, that God will hold the civil ruler responsible, and more heavily responsible than any private person, for any sin he may commit, and especially for any violation of law in any matter committed to his trust. And there is abundant reason for this. For the powers that be are ordained of God, and in His providence are placed in authority; not as the modern notion is, for the purpose of executing the will of the constituents, whatever that will may be, but rather the unchangeable will of the Most Holy God, the Ruler of all nations, so far as revealed, concerning the civil and social relations of men. Nor must it be forgotten that this eminent responsibility attaches, to them, not only in their official acts, but in all their acts as individuals. No distinction is made as to the sin for which the ruler must bring his sin-offering, whether public and official or private and personal. Of whatsoever kind the sin may be, if committed by a ruler, God holds him specially responsible, as being a ruler, and reckons the guilt of that sin, even if a private offence, to be heavier than if it had been committed by one of the common people. And this, for the evident reason that his exalted position gives his example double influence and effect. (*S. H. Kellogg, D.D.*) *Sins of the great*:—Judges and magistrates are the physicians of the state, and sins are the diseases of it. What kills it, whether a gangrene begin at the head or the heel, seeing both ways it will kill, if the part that is diseased be not cut off; except this be the difference, that the head being nearer the heart, a gangrene in the head will kill sooner than that which is in the heel. Even so will the sins of great ones overthrow a state sooner than those of the meaner sort; therefore wise was that advice of Sigismund the Emperor, when upon a motion to reform the Church, one said, "Let us begin at the minorities." "Nay rather," saith the Emperor, "let us begin at the majorities; for if the great ones be good, the meaner cannot be easily ill, but be the mean ones never so good, the great will be nothing the better." *The influence of a ruler's sin on others*:—Nourshivan the Just, being one day a-hunting, would have eaten of the game which he had killed, but from the consideration that, after dressing it, his attendants had no salt to give it relish. He sent at last to buy some at the next village, but with severe injunctions not to take it without paying for it. "What would be the harm," said one of his courtiers, "if the king did not pay for a little salt?" Nourshivan answered, "If a king gathers an apple in the garden of one of his subjects, on the morrow the courtiers cut down all the trees."

Vers. 27-31. If any one of the common people sin through ignorance.—*The sin-offering for the common people*:—I. THE PERSON: a common person. 1. If a common person sin his sins will ruin him; he may not be able to do so much mischief by his sin as the ruler or a public officer, but his sin has all the essence of evil in it, and God will reckon with him for it. No matter how obscurely you may live, however poor and unlettered you may be, your sin will ruin you if not pardoned and put away. If one of the common people sin through ignorance, his sin is a damning sin, he must have it put away, or it will put him away for ever from the face of God. 2. A common person's sin can only be removed by an atonement of blood. In this case you see the victim was not a bullock, it was a female of the goats or of the sheep, but still it had to be an offering of blood, for without shedding of blood there is no remission. However commonplace your offences may have been, however insignificant you may be yourself, nothing will cleanse you but the blood of Jesus Christ. 3. But here is the point of joy, that for the common people there was an atonement ordained of God. Glory be to God, I may be unknown to men, but I am not unthought of by Him. 4. Observe with thankfulness that the sacrifice appointed for the common people was as much accepted as that appointed for the ruler. Of the ruler it is said, "the priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him." The same thing is said of the common person. Christ is as much accepted for the poorest of His people as for the richest of them. II. THE SACRIFICE: "a kid of the goats, a female without blemish." 1. Observe that there is a discrepancy between the type and the reality, for first the sin-offering under the law was only for sins of ignorance. But we have a far better sacrifice for sin than that, for have we not read, "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from *all* sin," not from sins of ignorance only, but

from *all* sin. 2. Note another discrepancy, that the sinner of the common people in this case had to bring his sacrifice—"he shall bring his offering." But our sin-offering has been provided for us. 3. Now let us notice that in the type the victim chosen for a sin-offering was unblemished; whether it was a goat or a sheep, it must be unblemished. How could Christ make an atonement for sins if He had had sins of His own? 4. But, the main point about the sacrifice was, it was slain as a substitute. There is nothing said about its being taken outside the camp—I do not think it was in this case: all that the offerer knew was, it was slain as a substitute. And everything that is essential to know in order to be saved is to know that you are a sinner and that Christ is your Substitute. III. THE AFTER CEREMONIES. 1. In the case of one of the common people after the victim was slain, the blood was taken to the brazen altar, and the four horns of it were smeared, to show that the power of fellowship with God lies in the blood of substitution. There is no fellowship with God except through the blood, there is no acceptance with God for any one of us except through Him who suffered in our stead. 2. But then the blood was thrown at the feet of this same brazen altar, as if to show that the atonement is the foundation as well as the power of fellowship. We get nearest to God when we feel most the power of the blood, ay, and we could not come to God at all except it were through that encrimsoned way. 3. After this, a part of the offering was put upon the altar, and it is said concerning it, what is not said in any other of the cases, "the priest shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savour to the Lord." This common person had, in most respects, a dim view of Christ, compared with the others, but yet there were some points in which he had more light than others, for it does not say of the priest that what he offered was a sweet savour; but, for the comfort of this common person, that he might go his way having sweet consolation in his soul, he is told that the sin-offering he has brought is a sweet savour unto God. And oh, what a joy it is to think not only has Christ put away my sin if I believe in Him; but now for me He is a sweet savour to God, and I am for His sake accepted, for His sake beloved, for His sake delighted in, for His sake precious unto God. IV. I have purposely omitted an ESSENTIAL ACT in the sacrifice, in order to enlarge upon it now. Observe that in all four cases there was one thing which was never left out, "He shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin-offering." 1. That act signified confession. "Here I stand as a sinner, and confess that I deserve to die. This goat which is now to be slain represents in its sufferings what I deserve of God." Oh, sinner! confess your sin now unto your great God, acknowledge that He would be just if He condemned you. Confession of sin is a part of the meaning of laying on of the hand. 2. The next thing meant by it was acceptance. "I accept this goat as standing for me. I agree that this victim shall stand instead of me." That is what faith does with Christ, it puts its hand upon the ever blessed Son of God, and says, "He stands for me, I take Him as my Substitute." 3. The next meaning of it was transference. "I transfer, according to God's ordinance, all my sin which I here confess, from myself to this victim." By that act the transference was made. God did lay sin in bulk upon Christ when He laid upon Him the iniquity of us all, but by an act of faith every individual in another sense lays his sins on Jesus, and it is absolutely needful that each man should do so, if he would participate in the substitution. 4. This was a personal act. Nobody could lay his hand upon the bullock, or upon the goat, for another; each one had to put his own hand there. A godly mother could not say, "My graceless boy will not lay his hand upon the victim, but I will put my hand there for him." It could not be. He who laid his hand there had the blessing, but no one else, and had the godliest saint with holy but mistaken zeal said, "Rebellious man, wilt thou not put thy hand there, I will act as sponsor for thee," it had been of no avail; the offender must personally come. And so must you have a personal faith in Christ for yourself. The word is sometimes interpreted "to lean," and some give it the meaning of leaning hard. What a blessed view of faith that gives us! V. THE ASSURED BLESSING: "And it shall be forgiven him" (ver. 31). Was not that plain speaking? There were no "ifs," no "buts," no "peradventures"; but "it shall be forgiven him." Now, in those days it was only one sin, the sin confessed, that was forgiven, but now "all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men." In those days the forgiveness did not give the conscience abiding peace, for the offerer had to come with another sacrifice by and by; but now the blood of Christ blots out all the sins of believers at once and for ever, so that there is no need to bring a new sacrifice, or to come a second time with the blood of atonement in our hands. The sacrifice of the Jew had no intrinsic value.

How could the blood of bulls and goats take away sin? It could only be useful as a type of the true sacrifice, the sin-offering of Christ. But in our Lord Jesus there is real efficacy, there is true atonement, there is real cleansing, and whosoever believeth in Him shall find actual pardon and complete forgiveness at this very moment. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Lay his hand upon the head.**—*Laying the hand on the sacrifice*:—The text gives us a pictorial answer to the question—How can Christ's sacrifice become available for me? I. THE INTENT OF THE SYMBOL. 1. It was a confession of sin: else no need of a sin-offering. To this was added a confession of the desert of punishment, or why should the victim be slain? There was also an abandonment of all other methods of removing sin. 2. It was a consent to the plan of substitution. If God is content with this method of salvation, surely we may be. Substitution exceedingly honours the law, and vindicates justice. No other plan meets the case, or even looks fairly at it. 3. It was an acceptance of the victim. Jesus is the most natural substitute, for He is the Second Adam, the second head of the race; the true ideal man. He is the only Person able to offer satisfaction, having a perfect humanity united with His God-head. He alone is acceptable to God; He may well be acceptable to us. 4. It was a believing transference of sin. By laying on of hands sin was typically laid on the victim. It was laid there so as to be no longer on the offerer. 5. It was a dependence—leaning on the victim. Is there not a most sure stay in Jesus for the leaning heart? Consider the nature of the suffering and death by which the atonement was made, and you will rest in it. Consider the dignity and worth of the sacrifice by whom the death was endured. The glory of Christ's person enhances the value of His atonement (Heb. x. 5-10). II. THE SIMPLICITY OF THE SYMBOL. 1. There were no antecedent rites. The victim was there, and hands were laid on it: nothing more. We add neither preface nor appendix to Christ: He is Alpha and Omega. 2. The offerer came in all his sin. "Just as I am." It was to have his sin removed that the offerer brought the sacrifice: not because he had himself removed it. 3. There was nothing in his hand of merit or price. 4. There was nothing on his hand. No gold ring to indicate wealth; no signet of power; no jewel of rank. The offerer came as a man, and not as learned, rich, or honourable. 5. He performed no cunning legerdemain with his hand. By leaning upon it he took the victim to be his representative; but he placed no reliance upon ceremonial performances. 6. Nothing was done to his hand. His ground of trust was the sacrifice, not his hands. He desired his hand to be clean, but upon that fact he did not rest for pardon. (*Ibid.*) *All can lean on Christ*:—The Puritans speak of faith as a recumbency, a leaning. It needs no power to lean; it is a cessation from our own strength, and allowing our weakness to depend upon another's power. Let no man say, "I cannot lean"; it is not a question of what you can do, but a confession of what you cannot do, and a leaving of the whole matter with Jesus. (*Ibid.*)

CHAPTER V.

VER. 1. If he do not utter it.—*Of the difference between these laws in the fifth and those in the fourth chapter*:—1. The former laws seem to concern the Israelites specially, where it said (ver. 27), "If any people of the land"; but these concern all whosoever they see or know to offend. 2. The sins of ignorance there are propounded generally, here instance is given in some special and particular sins. 3. There sins are mentioned which a man committeth by himself, here such as are done by others whereby one may be defiled. 4. Beside these laws are set forth without any distinction of persons, as in the former chapter of the priest, the congregation, and prince, because the vulgar people are here understood, every law beginning thus, "If any soul," as chap. iv. 27. "If any soul of the people," by this phrase, then, are meant of private persons of the vulgar sort; as for the special persons as of the priest and prince, they must be understood here as in the former laws to make satisfaction for these sins also with the rite prescribed in their privileges. 5. Add hereunto the reason which is yielded by Tostatus that whereas sins of ignorance are incident both unto the priest, prince, and people, and differ in degree according to the quality of their persons, as it is more grievous for the high priest to fail by error or ignorance than the congregation, and for them

rather than the prince, yet for sins committed of malice and passion there cannot be the like difference, for the whole multitude cannot offend in passion as of ignorance as a particular person may (chap. iv. 1). But I resolve rather with C-jetane, that these laws are specially understood of private persons, and of private offences. 6. And this further difference there is between the sins rehearsed in this chapter and the former—that there the sins of ignorance are by name expressed, here such as proceed of passion; which kind of sins must be understood with some kind of limitation, for there is no sin committed, though of malice, but there is some passion in it, as he which for fear or hope of reward forsweareth himself is led by some passion, yet it cannot properly be called a sin of passion. (1) It must be a strong and forcible passion which are either wrath or lust—the love of money is none of them. (2) It must be a passion suddenly rising, not inveterate, as he that is suddenly enraged sinneth of passion, not he which doth any evil of hatred which is a settled, festered, and inveterate passion, for such an one deliberately offendeth, and not of passion. (*A. Willet, D.D.*) *Sins of silence*:—The spiritual truth underlying the Mosaic law is that man is under the direct eye of God, and his life is, therefore, lifted into direct responsibility to God. God sees us, and God sees everything about us and within us. Sins of silence and secrecy, sins of public error and notoriety, which go before a man to judgment, are alike open and naked to Him with whom we have to do. Moses taught that the life of the meanest man fulfilled itself under the open eye of heaven. He was no mere atom in the human ant-hill, no insignificant unit of humanity, lost in the vast ebb and flow of universal life, for insignificance is impossible to man, and obscurity is denied him. He was a person, active, powerful, working woe or weal to others; and just as the calling of a man's voice, or the footfall of a child's step, stir the waves of sound which travel onward and ever onward, till they may be said to break upon the shores of the furthest stars, so the influences of a man's life are boundless. This passage is a striking illustration of these principles. It recognises that sin may lie in silence as in speech, that to hear the word of swearing and not rebuke it is to share the guilt of it; that men are responsible to each other because they are responsible to God. There are three forces in human life, the action of which is illustrated by this passage. I. The first is *INFLUENCE*—that intangible personal atmosphere which clothes every man, an invisible belt of magnetism, as it were, which he carries with him. Every human being seems to possess a moral atmosphere quite peculiar to himself, which invests and interprets him, and the presence of which others readily detect. For instance, a pure woman carries a moral and ennobling atmosphere with her. The atmosphere which clothes her seems to flood the room, and the coarse weeds of vicious thought and talk cannot thrive in it. Or look on the other side of the illustration. Picture a type of man but too common—the fast man of society. There is an exhalation of evil which goes before him and spreads around him. That is influence: something subtle, undefinable, yet real; without lips, yet speaking; without visible shape, yet acting with tremendous potency, like the magnetic forces which throb and travel unseen around us, bidden in the dewdrop and uttered in the thunder; influence, which streams out from every human being, and shapes others, and moulds and makes them; influence, which is stronger than action, more eloquent than speech, more enduring than life, which being holy sows the centuries with the seeds of holy life, and being evil multiplies, indeed, transgressors in the earth! II. The second force is *EXAMPLE*. Every man sets a copy for his neighbour, and his neighbour is quick to reproduce it. The covetous man has a miser for his son, the light woman has a daughter hastening towards the ways of shame, the drunkard infects a whole neighbourhood with his vices. III. And then, from influence and example there results *RESPONSIBILITY*. You can as easily evade the law of gravitation as the law of human responsibility. If you cease to speak that will not rid you of the burden; you must cease to *be* to do that. Nay, even death itself is powerless to destroy influence. Often it multiplies it a thousandfold. Is the life of the heroes, the patriots, the martyrs really closed? They were never so much alive as now; the fire that slew them freed them, and the steps of their scaffolds were the staircase of immortality. Thus influence and example bring with them responsibility to God and responsibility to man. IV. Let us mark further *THE PRECISE WAY IN WHICH THESE FORCES WORK*. 1. First, it is clear that personal sin always involves others. "If a man hear the voice of swearing," if he even knows of it, he shares the complicity of the sin. There is always some one who hears, who witnesses, who shares. Here is the most tragic and awful aspect of sin—we

share our sins! We have involved others in our guilt, and if we forget they will go remembering. It is well that thou shouldst stand in God's house to-day, clothed with decorous reverence, unsuspected, and with no scar of fire upon thee; but what of the poor soiled body of that other one, the sharer of thy sin and shame? For there is a dreadful comradeship in guilt—often intentional, for men love company in their sins, but often unintentional, for others share what they concealed and know what they did secretly. It is the most appalling aspect sin assumes; it is never sterile, it is always multiplying and prolific, passing like a fever-taint from man to man; till from one sin a world is infected and corrupt.

2. Notice again, that he who sees a sin and does not rebuke it shares the sin and bears its iniquity. The only way to purge one's self of the contaminating complicity of another man's guilt is instantly to witness against it. There is no other course open to a spiritual honesty. (1) Look, for instance, at this truth personally. No one need go very far for an illustration. You are a youth employed in a warehouse or office where religion is at a discount. In the warehouse there is sure to be a fast set, a group of youths whose habitual talk is seasoned with profanity or impurity, and who are always eager to get an audience for their shameful recitals. You were silent, you blushed, you were indignant, you turned aside full of abhorrence for the sin and contempt for the sinner, and no doubt you flattered yourself you must be very virtuous and good to feel such virtuous anger, and there you were content to rest. But this text puts an entirely new meaning on your conduct; because you did not witness against that sin you shared it. Blushing is one thing, confessing Christ quite another. (2) Look at this matter nationally. Look at what is going on at the present time in India, Hong Kong, the Barbadoes, wherever the flag of Britain is flying. What is going on, do you ask? This, that wherever that flag goes the shame of British vice follows. And now, mark, who is responsible for all this? According to my text, all who know the facts, and therefore from this hour all who hear these words are responsible for the existence of this licensed infamy. This passage particularly rebukes, then, sins of silence. To be silent when you should speak is as evil as to speak when you should be silent. To be tongue-tied by cowardice when wrong discovers its hideous nakedness to us, is as vile a thing as to praise wrong and sing the coronation song of wickedness. (*W. J. Dawson.*) *The sin of conniving at wrong-doings*:—I. THAT THE SINS OF MEN CANNOT EVADE WITNESSES. An old writer has forcibly said "that to every sin there must be at least two witnesses," viz., "a man's own conscience and the great God." II. THAT IT IS THE DUTY OF WITNESSES TO GIVE EVIDENCE WHEN JUSTICE DEMANDS IT. When a witness heard the words of adjuration he was required at the proper place to give the needed information. It was his duty because—(1) The law of the Lord commanded it, and (2) The purity of society demanded it. III. THAT IN CONCEALING EVIDENCE AGAINST SIN WE INVOLVE OURSELVES IN SERIOUS GUILT. The guilt of concealing evidence is seen, in that by so doing we—1. Dishonour God's voice, which speaks within us. 2. Disobey God's published laws. 3. Decrease our own antipathy to sin. 4. Encourage the trespasser in his wrong-doing. All sin ought to be acknowledged and expiated for the sake of the sinner and the wronged. (*F. W. Brown.*) *Lessons*:—1. Not to conceal, or consent to other men's sins. 2. God's dishonour not to be endured. 3. Confession of our sins unto God necessary (ver. 5). This is the beginning of amendment. 4. Against negligent hearers of the Word (ver. 15). 5. Against sacrilege. 6. To take heed of the sleights and subtle temptations of Satan. 6. To appear before the Lord in sincerity and simplicity of heart. (*A. Willet, D.D.*) *The voice of swearing repudiated*:—When the late Rev. Mr. K— was settled in his congregation of S—, they could not furnish him with lodgings. In these circumstances, a Captain P—, in the neighbourhood, though a stranger to religion, took him into his family. But our young clergyman soon found himself in very unpleasant circumstances, owing to the captain's practice of swearing. One day at table, after a very liberal volley of oaths from the captain, he observed calmly, "Captain, you have certainly made use of a number of very improper terms." The captain, who was rather a choleric man, was instantly in a blaze. "Pray, sir, what improper terms have I used?" "Surely, captain, you must know," replied the clergyman with greater coolness; "and having already put me to the pain of hearing them, you cannot be in earnest in imposing upon me the additional pain of repeating them." "You are right, sir," resumed the captain, "you are right. Support your character, and we will respect you. We have a parcel of clergymen around us here who seem quite uneasy till they get us to unders and

that we may use any freedom we please before them, and we despise them." *Guilty silence deplored and amended*:—Kilstein, a pious German minister, once heard a labouring man use the most awful curses and imprecations in a fit of passion, without reproving him for it. This so troubled him that he could scarcely sleep the following night. In the morning he arose early, soon saw the man coming along, and addressed him as follows: "My friend, it is you I am waiting to see." "You are mistaken," replied the man; "you have never seen me before." "Yes, I saw you yesterday," said Kilstein, "whilst returning from your work, and heard you praying." "What! heard me pray?" said the man. "I am sure now that you are mistaken, for I never prayed in my life." "And yet," calmly but earnestly replied the minister, "if God had heard your prayer, you would not be here, but in hell; for I heard you beseeching God that He might strike you with blindness and condemn you unto hell fire." The man turned pale, and trembling said: "Dear sir, do you call this prayer? Yes, it is true, I did this very thing." "Now, my friend," continued Kilstein, "as you acknowledge it, it is my duty to beseech you to seek with the same earnestness the salvation of your soul as you have hitherto its damnation, and I will pray to God that He will have mercy upon you." From this time the man regularly attended upon the ministry of Kilstein, and ere long was brought in humble repentance to Christ as a true believer. "A word in season how good it is." "Be instant in season and out of season; rebuke, reprove, exhort, with all long-suffering and patience." *Sister Dora's noble rebuke of swearing*:—Sister Dora was once travelling, as usual, third class, when a number of half-drunken navvies got in after her, and before she could change her carriage the train was in motion. She recollected that her dress, a black gown and cloak, with a quiet black bonnet and veil, would probably, as on former encounters with half-intoxicated men, protect her from insult. Her fellow-travellers began to talk, and at last one of them swore several blasphemous oaths. Sister Dora's whole soul burnt within her, and she thought, "Shall I sit and hear this?" but then came the reflection, "What will they do to me if I interfere?" and this dread kept her quiet a moment or two longer. But the language became more and more violent, and it passed through her mind, "What must these men think of any woman who can sit by and hear such words unmoved; but, above all, what will they think of a woman in my dress who is afraid to speak to them?" At once she stood up her full height in the carriage and called out loudly, "I will not hear the Master whom I serve spoken of in this way." Immediately they dragged her down into her seat, with a torrent of oaths, and one of the most violent roared, "Hold your jaw, you fool; do you want your face smashed in?" They held her down on the seat between them; nor did she attempt to struggle, satisfied with having made her open protest. At the next station they let her go, and she quickly got out of the carriage. A minute after, while she was standing on the platform, she heard a rough voice behind her, "Shake hands, mum! you're a good-plucked one, you are! You were right and we were wrong." She gave her hand to the man, who hurried away, for fear, no doubt, that his comrades should jeer at him. *Sins of ignorance classified*:—If we compare the fourth and the sixth chapters of Leviticus, it is very evident that the first broad distinction between them is that the former treats of sins committed ignorantly, the latter of sins committed knowingly. The division, however, into sins ignorantly, and sins knowingly committed, is not alone sufficient. Sins committed ignorantly, greatly vary, not only in the degree, but also in the kind of ignorance; and for such ignorance, we may be in different degrees responsible. In order, therefore, to mark that such differences are appreciated by God, and that He desires that we, too, should appreciate them, various classifications of sins of ignorance are given in the fifth chapter; in some of which there is so much of self-caused ignorance that they very nearly approach, in the character of their guilt, to sins knowingly committed. Indeed in the first example given in the fifth chapter, there is so much that is voluntary in the action supposed, that we may perhaps wonder how such an action can at all be placed in the same rank with sins of ignorance. The case supposed is that of a person, who having committed a sin, and being adjured to declare it, refuses. It is evident that terror, or forgetfulness, or carelessness, or some plausible sophistry whereby we may deceive ourselves into the belief that our particular case is an exception to the general rule, may prevent such a sin from being committed with the deliberate voluntariness that marks the trespasses of the sixth chapter. But it stands in striking contrast with sins that spring from that deep universal ignorance which characterises the sins of the fourth chapter. The second case is that of

unconsciously touching something that is unclean. Here, again, there is evidently no ignorance of any general principle. The ignorance concerns a specific fact, and is, more or less, the result of carelessness or failure in applying the tests which we possess. There are, however, cases in which ignorance of particulars is the immediate result of being imbued with false general principles. He whose mind has been from his youth up trained in the school of error, and thence received principles which have formed his habits of thought and action, will be found very incapable of determining what is clean or unclean in the particulars of action. The eye of his conscience is blinded; his moral sense is paralysed. The wandering or inattentive eye may be recalled to observation; the slumbering eye may be aroused; but how can we gain the attention of an eye, over which the film of thick darkness has firmly formed? Sins committed in such darkness as this would properly be traced to ignorance as their root, and would be classed with the sins of the fifth chapter, requiring the sin-offering as there described. (*B. W. Newton.*)

Complacent ignorance:—Transgression may ensue from lack of knowledge that such conduct is forbidden; or it may be that, knowing the prohibition, disobedience is speciously excused on some vague plea that circumstances warrant it or expediency condones it. In such cases ignorance, if it be really ignorance at all, is self-induced, and is therefore the more culpable. Amid such reprehensible forms of ignorance may be placed—I. CARELESSNESS; the mind too placid to rouse itself to inquiry. II. INDISCRIMINATION; the habit of ignoring vital principles and conniving at inconsistencies. III. SELF-EXCUSING; finding exceptional circumstances which extenuate faults and condone misconduct. IV. NEGLECT OF SCRIPTURE; not “coming to the light lest their deeds should be reproved” (John iii. 20). V. SATISFACTION WITH A STATE OF CONSCIOUS DARKNESS; indifference to precise regulations of religion, indisposition of heart towards “perfect holiness”; a loose and easy content over failings and negligence. Ignorance is by some persons consciously cherished: it allows them a covert from the exactions of a lofty and honest piety. VI. PLAUSIBLE SOPHISTRY; entertaining the delusion that because there is not determined wilfulness in sinning, or not fullest knowledge of God’s prohibitions of sin, they are less responsible, less to be condemned. Note: Many persons, trained from youth in a school of error, grow up with false principles dominating their judgments and consciences, or with ignorance of the application of right principles to particular incidents and actions. Thus Luther, trained amid the blinding theories of Romanism, groped on till manhood in delusions and dimness. Thus Paul, brought up amid the traditions of Judaism, found his soul clouded with wholly wrong thoughts concerning what was “doing God service.” It is our duty to undeceive ourselves, to inquire after knowledge, to seek full light, that our dimness may yield to discernment. A complacent ignorance is as the softly gliding stream which flows onwards to the rapids. To be able to rest in such self-satisfied ignorance indicates that self-delusion has begun, portending doom. “Whom the gods would destroy they first dement.” 1. Search the Scriptures. 2. Seek the Spirit’s illumination. 3. Culture a pure and enlightened conscience. 4. Exercise the judgment and will in efforts to “cease from evil and learn to do well.” (*W. H. Jellie.*)

Adjuration:—Our translation suggests, if it suggests at all, a very obscure and imperfect meaning. It is not, “If a soul hear a person swear, and do not rebuke the swearer, or tell of the swearer,” which seems to be suggested by our version; but, “If a person summoned to a court of law, under the ancient Jewish economy, adjured by the officiating judge to tell the truth, should not so tell the truth, and all that he knew, then he should be guilty. We have an illustration of this verse in such a passage as that where the high priest came to our blessed Lord, as recorded in Matt. xxvi. 63, and said, “I adjure thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God.” Now, that was the high priest acting upon the first verse of this very chapter. And our Lord then heard what is called “the swearing” in this verse, or what in that case was the adjuration of the high priest; and as you notice, so obedient was the true Lamb, the true Saviour, to all the requirements of the ceremonial law, that though He had been dumb when asked previously, yet the moment that the high priest adjured Him, that moment, in obedience to the first verse of this chapter, our blessed Lord answered the question addressed to Him; as if it was impossible that He could fail in the observance of the least jot or tittle of the ceremonial law, any more than in the weightiest requirement of God’s moral law. We have in Prov. xxix. an allusion to this: “He heareth an adjuration, and telleth not,”—that is laid down as a sin, or, in other words, the violation of this verse. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*)

Ver. 2. **He also shall be unclean.**—*Moral contagion*:—This avoidance of unclean animals and places is not without practical illustration in our own personal experience and action. To-day, for example, we avoid places that are known to be fever-stricken. We are alarmed lest we should bring ourselves within the influence of contagion. The strongest man might fear if he knew that a letter were put into his hand which had come from a house where fever was fatally raging. However heroic he might be in sentiment, and however inclined to boast of the solidity of his nervous system, it is not impossible that even the strongest man might shrink from taking the hand of a fever-stricken friend. All this is natural and all this is justifiable, and, in fact, any defiance of this would be unnatural and unjustifiable. Is there, then, no suggestion in all such rational caution that there may be moral danger from moral contagion? Can a body emit pestilence and a soul dwell in all evil and riot in all wantonness without giving out an effluvia fatal to moral vigour and to spiritual health? The suggestion is preposterous. They are the unwise and most reprehensible men who being afraid of a fever have no fear of a moral pestilence; who running away in mortal terror from influences leading towards small-pox, cholera, and other fatal diseases, rush into companionships, and actions, and servitudes which are positively steeped and saturated with moral pollution. That we are more affected by the one than by the other only shows that we are more body than soul. Literally, the text does not refer in all probability to a purely spiritual action, yet not the less is the suggestion justified by experience that even the soul considered in its most spiritual sense may touch things that are unclean and may be defiled by them. A poor thing indeed that the mind has kept itself away from pollution and defilement if the mind has opened wide all the points of access to the influence of evil. Sin may not only be in the hand, it may be rolled as a sweet morsel under the tongue. There may be a chamber of imagery in the heart. A man may be utterly without offence in any social acceptance of that term—actually a friend of magistrates and judges, and himself a high interpreter of the law of social morality and honour, and yet all the while may be hiding a very perdition in his heart. It is the characteristic mystery of the salvation of Jesus Christ that it does not come to remove stains upon the flesh or spots upon the garments, but to work out an utter and eternal cleansing in the secret places of the soul, so that the heart itself may in the event be without “spot or wrinkle or any such thing”—pure, holy, radiant, even dazzling with light, fit to be looked upon by the very eye of God. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Dread of defilement*:—Pierius Valerianus, in his book of Egyptian Hieroglyphics, maketh mention of a kind of white mouse, called the Armenian mouse, being of such a cleanly disposition, that it will rather die than be any way defiled, so that the passage into her hole being besmeared with any filth, she will rather expose herself to the mercy of her cruel enemy, than any way seek to save her life by passing so foul an entrance. (*J. Spencer.*) *Defilement to be avoided*:—Men have looked into the crater of a volcano to see what was there, and going down to explore, without coming back to report progress. Many and many a man has gone to see what was in hell, that did see it. Many and many a man has looked to see what was in the cup, and found a viper coiled up therein. Many and many a man has gone into the house of lust, and found that the ends thereof were death—bitter, rotten death. Many and many a man has sought to learn something of the evils of gambling, and learned it to his own ruin. And I say to every man, the more you know about these things the more you ought to be ashamed of knowing; a knowledge of them is not necessary to education or manhood; and they ought to be avoided, because when a man has once fallen into them, the way out is so steep and hard. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Ver. 5. **He shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing.**—*Sin must be fully confessed*:—Cover sin over as much as we may, and smother it down as carefully as we can, it will break out. Many years ago the packet ship *Poland* was bound for Havre, with a cargo of cotton on board. By some singular accident the cotton took fire clear down in the hold. The captain, finding that he could not reach the fire, undertook to smother it; but in vain. Then he caulked down the hatchways; but the deck grew so hot that neither passengers nor crew could stand on it. At length he fired a signal gun in distress, put all his people into the boats, and left the doomed ship to her fate. He watched her as she ploughed gallantly through the waves, with all her canvas on; but ere she sunk below the horizon, the fire burst forth in a sheet of flame to the mast-head. That ill-fated packet, carrying the

fatal fire in her own hold, is a vivid picture of the moral condition of thousands of men and women. They cover their sins by all manner of concealments; they batten down the hatchways with a show of respectability, and, alas! sometimes with an outward profession of religion; but the deadly thing remains underneath in the heart, and if it does not burst forth in this world, it will in the next. Probably this reveals the reason why some Church members are so constantly halting and stumbling and fall so easily into backsliding. Their "first works" of repentance and confession to God were shallow. (*T. L. Cuyler.*) *Particular sins must be confessed*.—Physicians meeting with diseased bodies, when they find a general distemperature, they labour by all the art they can to draw the humour to another place, and then they break it, and bring out all the corruptions that way; all which is done for the better ease of the patient. Even so must all of us do when we have a general and confused sorrow for our sins; *i.e.*, labour as much as may be to draw them into particulars; as to say, In this and in this, at such and such a time, on such an occasion, and in such a place, I have sinned against my God; for it is not enough for a man to be sorrowful in the general, because he is a sinner; but he must draw himself out into particulars, in what manner, and with what sins he hath displeased God, otherwise he may deceive his own soul. (*J. Spencer.*)

Vers. 14-19. If a soul commit a trespass.—*The trespass-offering*.—I. AS TO THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER OF THIS OFFERING. 1. It was not a "sweet savour" offering. Christ is here seen suffering for sins; the view of His work is expiatory. 2. It was a trespass as distinct from a sin-offering. Not the person, but the act of wrong-doing, is the point noticed and dwelt upon. And how solemn is the truth here taught us, that neither our conscience, nor our measure of light, nor our ability, but the truth of God, is the standard by which both sin and trespass are to be measured. "Though he wist it not, yet is he guilty; he hath certainly trespassed against the Lord." If man's conscience or man's light were the standard, each man might have a different rule. And, at this rate, right or wrong, good or evil, would depend, not upon God's truth, but on the creature's apprehension of it. At this rate, the filthiest of unclean beasts could not be convicted of uncleanness, while it could plead that it had no apprehension of that which was pure and seemly. But we do not judge thus in the things of this world; neither does God judge so in the things of heaven. Who argues that because swine are filthy, therefore the standard of cleanliness is to be set by their perceptions or ability; or that because they seem unconscious of their state, therefore the distinction between what is clean and unclean must be relinquished. No: we judge not by their perceptions, but our own; with our light and knowledge, not their ignorance, as our standard. 3. In the trespass-offering we get restitution, full restitution for the original wrong. The amount of the injury, according to the priest's valuation of it, is paid in shekels of the sanctuary to the injured person. The thought here is not that trespass is punished, but that the injured party is repaid the wrong. The payment was in shekels: these "shekels of the sanctuary" were the appointed standard by which God's rights were measured; as it is said, "And all thy estimation shall be according to the shekel of the sanctuary." Thus they represent the truest measure, God's standard by which He weighs all things. By this standard the trespass is weighed, and then the value paid to the injured person. And God and man, though wronged by trespass, each receive as much again from man in Christ through the trespass-offering. Whether honour, service, worship, or obedience, whatever God could claim, whatever man could rob Him of, all this has He received again from man in Christ, "according to the priest's estimation in shekels of the sanctuary." But man also was injured by trespass; and he, too, receives as much again. Christ for man as offerer of the trespass-offering, must offer to injured man the value of the original injury. And such as accept His offering find their loss through man's trespass more than paid. Has trespass wronged man of life, peace, or gladness, he may claim and receive through Christ repayment. For man to man, as for man to God, Christ stands the One in whom man's wrongs are remedied. 4. But this is not all. Not only is the original wrong paid, but a fifth part more is paid with it in the trespass-offering. Who would have thought that from the entrance of trespass, both God and man should in the end be gainers? But so it is. From man in Christ both God and man have received back more than they were robbed of. In this sense, "where sin abounded," yea, and because sin abounded, "grace did more abound." II. THE VARIETIES OR GRADES IN THIS OFFERING. These are fewer than in any other offering, teaching us

that those who apprehended this aspect of Christ's work, will apprehend it all very much alike. It will be remembered that in the sin-offering the varieties were most numerous and that because sin in us may be, and is, so differently apprehended; but trespass, the act of wrong committed, if seen at all, can scarce be seen differently. Accordingly, we find but one small variety in the trespass-offering, for I can scarce regard the two different aspects of trespass as varieties. These aspects are, first, trespasses against God, and then trespasses against our neighbour; but this distinction is more like the difference between the offerings than the varieties in different grades of the same. It simply points out distinct bearings of trespass, for which in each case the atonement seen is precisely similar. There is, however, one small yet remarkable difference between the two grades of the offering for wrongs in holy things. In the first grade, which gives us the fullest view of the offering, we read of the life laid down, the restitution made, and the fifth part added. But in the lower class, the last of these is unnoticed: "the fifth part" is quite unseen. And how true this is in the experience of Christians. Where the measure of apprehension is full, there not only the life laid down, and the restitution made in the trespass-offering, but all the truth also which is caught in the "fifth part," will be seen as a consequence of trespass and a part of the trespass-offering. Not so, however, where the apprehension is limited: here there is no addition seen beyond the amount of the original trespass. (*A. Jukes.*) *The trespass-offering; or, substitution and restitution.*—I. THE TRESPASS-OFFERING (or guilt-offering, R.V.) refers more especially to the evil actions which are the outcome of our corrupt nature: while the sin that is inherent in that nature, as descendants of fallen Adam, is fully met in the sin-offering—last considered. The evil deeds, or sins, met by the trespass-offering may be thus divided—as against God and against man. II. "A TRESPASS . . . THROUGH IGNORANCE, in the HOLY THINGS OF THE LORD," is the first mentioned. Here there is a similarity to the sin spoken of in chap. iv., for it is "through ignorance." Who can measure the holiness of God, or know the extent of sin against such a Being? Perfect purity and holiness demand the same; but we are born in sin, "shapen in iniquity" (Psa. li. 5); and "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one" (Job xiv. 4). Hence, till the heart is changed by "the grace of God" (Rom. v. 15; 1 Cor. xv. 10), the sin within is ever showing itself in evil actions; and even after we know the Lord we are apt to trespass in His "holy things." In men's very religion, too, there may be sin. How often do they invent a worship of their own, not in accordance with God's Word; a way of salvation which dishonours Him; a way of approach to Him other than He has given! If living for self, the world, or other purpose than God's glory, we are robbing God. It may be through ignorance, but "though he wist it not, yet he is guilty, and shall bear his iniquity" (vers. 17-19), saith the Lord. There is thus no hope for us in ourselves, but He has met this (as all) our need in His "Beloved Son," as shown in type before us, for the sinning one is bidden to bring—1. "A ram without blemish . . . for a trespass-offering" (guilt-offering, R.V.), "and the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his ignorance . . .;" for "he hath certainly trespassed against the Lord." Mark well the words "certainly trespassed," though in ignorance. The same truth is here again shown, that no sin could be atoned for without the shedding of Jesu's blood; but His was a full, perfect, and complete atonement, when He made "His soul a guilt-offering" (Isa. liii. 10, marg., R.V.; same word as vers. v. 19, R.V.). He "was delivered up for our trespasses" (Rom. iv. 25, v. 16, R.V.) 2. "Shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary," were also to be brought with the ram, to "make amends for the harm . . . done in the holy thing." No lower standard than God's could be accepted. Have we a just perception of God's holiness? 3. A fifth part added. Who could do this in its full meaning? None but Jesus. And He brought more glory to God by redemption than could have accrued from creation. Christ was perfect in His obedience to God's holy law, and gave rich surplus. He—the Antitype of trespass-offering (both of ram and silver, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19)—was also Priest who made atonement or reconciliation (Rom. v. 10, 11; 1 John ii. 2); and the blessed result is—4. Forgiveness (vers. 16, 18) to "all that believe" (Acts xiii. 38, 39). III. WRONG DONE TO A NEIGHBOUR is equally described as "trespass against the Lord" (chap. vi. 1-7). This the unregenerate heart fails to see, but God pronounces it to be "sin"; and the truth of Heb. ix. 22 is once more brought before us; but, in contrast to the trespass against the holy things, in the case of wrong done to a neighbour—restitution with addition of fifth part must be made, before bringing the trespass-offering of "a ram without

blemish," with the "estimation." The former teaches that only on the ground of blood shed could God accept the offerer, or "the amends" He would have him make; whereas, in the case of wrong done to a neighbour, "amends" must first be made to that neighbour before pardon can be sought of God. This is the lesson enforced by our Lord (Matt. v. 23, 24, vi. 14, 15). See, too, Zaccheus ready to "restore fourfold" (Luke xix. 8). To approach God with a wrong against a neighbour unredressed will not bring acceptance; while in the case of trespass against the Lord in holy things, pardon through Jesus must first be sought before "amends for the harm" done, can be accepted. Each must be according to God's ordering, and then there is the same gracious promise of forgiveness (vers. 16, 18, vi. 7; Eph. iv. 32; Col. iii. 13).

IV. THE LAW OF THE TRESPASS-OFFERING opens out some further details (chap. vii. 1-7). It was to be—1. Killed in the same place as the burnt-offering (chap. i. 5, 11), that is, "on the side of the altar northward before the Lord." It was the "same Jesus" in all, though different aspects and results of His death are presented in each. 2. The blood was to be sprinkled "round about upon the altar." Only in the sin-offering was it to be poured out, as that offering presented a more comprehensive view of the fulness of the atonement. 3. The costliest parts were to be burned on the altar, as in the sin-offering, telling of the rich and intrinsic excellency of the Lord Jesus which could stand the searching fire of God's holiness. 4. "Most holy" (chaps. vi. 25, 29; vii. 1, 6). The use of such an expression, in connection with sin-offering and trespass-offering is most striking. The more we meditate thereon the more we learn how the heart's affection, mind, inward parts, were all perfect in Jesus—hence He is a perfect Saviour. Lastly, the trespass-offering was—5. To be eaten in the Holy Place, by "every male among the priests," typifying the Church, as partakers of Him who bare their "sins" (1 Pet. ii. 24), while "the priest that maketh atonement" was type of Jesus, thus seen to identify Himself with His people. (*Lady Beaujolois Dent.*)

Sacrilege:—The trespass here indicated is sacrilege—mistake and misappropriation in the use of sacred things: a culpable trespass, whether done wittingly or unwittingly. From this rite we are taught—I. THE JEALOUSY OF JEHOVAH FOR THE HONOUR OF HIS WORSHIP IN THE TABERNACLE. II. THE INFLUENCE THIS JEALOUSY WAS CALCULATED TO EXERT UPON THE WORSHIPPERS IN THE TABERNACLE. 1. Sensitiveness of feeling. 2. Tenderness of conscience. 3. Scrupulousness of conduct. (*F. W. Brown*).

Reparation:—I. SIN IS A WRONG DONE TO GOD. II. SIN IS A WRONG DONE TO MAN. Amends must be made by—1. Appropriate contrition. 2. Personal sacrifice. 3. Unreserved consecration: evincing itself in a holy, useful, Christly life. (*Ibid.*)

Error, though inadvertent, is guilty:—I. A SOPHISTRY NEEDING CORRECTION. This: that intention constitutes the quality of an action, whether conduct is criminal or not. But this declaration of "guilt," though in the action he "wist it not," testifies against a sweeping and all-inclusive application of that principle, viz., that intention qualifies action. 1. Ignorance may and does extenuate the guilt of an action. Knowledge deepens guilt (John ix. 41; xv. 22). Ignorance alleviates it (Luke xxiii. 34; Acts iii. 17; 1 Tim. i. 13). 2. Yet ignorance cannot excuse guilt. A man is not excused for breaking the laws of the land because he was ignorant of them. Nor is he innocent who trespasses, through error, against any ordinance of the Lord. And, if so in respect of ceremonial observances, much more so in relation to moral duties. Hence the curse stands against "every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. iii. 10). 3. God Himself refuses to condone such ignorance. His Word declares that men "perish for lack of knowledge" (Hos. iv. 6); and that though "a people be of no understanding, He will not have mercy on them, and will show them no favour." II. MAN'S UNCOMPUTED GUILT. 1. Reckon up our remembered sins. "They are more in number than the hairs of our head." 2. Add the sins realised at the time but now forgotten. Memory lets slip multitudinous trespasses. 3. Yet what can represent the number of our unrecognised sins, done in ignorance, done in error? 4. Deviations and defects also, which God's eye alone detected, and which we too self-indulgently condoned. III. VAST VIRTUE NEEDED IN ATONEMENT. 1. Under the ceremonial arrangements for expiation, how manifold and minute and numerous were the regulations and provisions necessary to make atonement for sin! 2. When all sin had to be expiated by Christ's one offering, what value it must needs possess! Yet "by one offering" the Saviour "purged our sins." (1) It summons us to faith. "Look unto Me and be ye saved." "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." (2) It incites us to grateful adoration. "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood," &c. (Rev. i. 5, 6). (3) It

assures us of perfect redemption. "There remaineth no more offering for sin," for "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." (*W. H. Jellie.*) *Gain by redemption:*—In the addition of "the fifth part," as here set forth, we have a feature of the true trespass-offering, which, it is to be feared, is but little appreciated. When we think of all the wrong and all the trespass which we have done against the Lord; and, further, when we remember how God has been wronged of His rights in this wicked world, with what interest can we contemplate the work of the Cross as that wherein God has not merely received back what was lost, but whereby He is an actual gainer. He has gained more by redemption than ever He lost by the fall. "The sons of God" could raise a loftier song of praise around the empty tomb of Jesus than ever they raised in view of the Creator's accomplished work. The wrong has not only been perfectly atoned for, but an eternal advantage has been gained by the work of the Cross. This is a stupendous truth. God is a gainer by the work of Calvary. Who could have conceived this? When we behold man, and the creation of which he was lord, laid in ruins at the feet of the enemy, how could we conceive that, from amid those ruins, God should gather richer and nobler spoils than any which our unfallen world could have yielded? Blessed be the name of Jesus for all this! It is to Him we owe it all. It is by His precious Cross that ever a truth so amazing, so divine, could be enunciated. (*C. H. Mackintosh.*)

Vers. 17, 18. *Though he wist it not, yet is he guilty.*—*Sins of ignorance:*—It is supposed in our text that men might commit forbidden things without knowing it; nay, it is not merely supposed, but it is taken for granted, and provided for. The Levitical law had special statutes for sins of ignorance, and one of its sections begins with these words (chap. iv. 2). It is first of all supposed that a priest may sin (chap. iv. 3). As Trapp says, "The sins of teachers are teachers of sins," and therefore they were not overlooked, but had to be expiated by trespass-offerings. Further on in the chapter (ver 22) it is supposed that a ruler may sin. Errors in leaders are very fruitful of mischief, and therefore they were to be repented of and put away by an expiatory sacrifice. It was also according to the law regarded as very likely that any man might fall into sins of ignorance, for in chap. iv. ver. 27, we read, "And if any one of the common people sin through ignorance, while he doeth somewhat against any of the commandments of the Lord." The sin even of the commonest person was not to be passed over as a mere trifle, even though he could plead ignorance of the law. An enlightened conscience mourns over sins of ignorance, which it would never do if they were innocent mistakes. The word rendered "ignorance" may also bear the translation of "inadvertence." Inadvertence is a kind of acted ignorance: a man frequently does wrong for want of thought, through not considering the bearing of his action, or even thinking at all. He carelessly and hastily blunders into the course which first suggests itself, and errs because he did not study to be right. There is very much sin of this kind committed every day. There is no intent to do wrong, and yet wrong is done. Culpable neglect creates a thousand faults. "Evil is wrought by want of thought as well as want of heart." We do not take time enough to examine our actions; we do not take good heed to our steps. Life should be a careful work of art, in which every single line and tint should be the fruit of study and thought, like the paintings of the great master who was wont to say, "I paint for eternity"; but alas! life is often slurred over, like those hasty productions of the scene painter, in which present effect alone is studied, and the canvas becomes a mere daub of colours hastily laid on. We seem intent to do much rather than to do well; we want to cover space rather than to reach perfection. This is not wise. Oh that every single thought were conformed to the will of God! Now, seeing that there are sins of ignorance and sins of inadvertence, what about them? Is there any actual guilt in them? In our text we have the Lord's mind and judgment. I. By the Divine declaration that sins of ignorance are really sins THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD IS HONoured. 1. Enlarging upon this thought, I would observe that hereby the law is declared to be the supreme authority over men. The law is supreme, not conscience. Conscience is differently enlightened in different men, and the ultimate appeal as to right and wrong cannot be to your half-blinded conscience or to mine. If we break the law, although our conscience may not blame us, or even inform us of the wrong, yet still the deed is recorded against us; we must bear our iniquity. The law is also set above human opinion, for this man says, "You may do that," and a second claims that he may do the other, but the law changes not according to man's judgment,

and does not bend itself to the spirit of the age or the taste of the period. It is the supreme judge, from whose infallible decision there is no appeal. This exalts the law above the custom of nations and periods; for men are very wont to say, "It is true I did so and so, which I could not have defended in itself; but then it is the way of the trade, other houses do so, general opinion and public consent have endorsed the custom; I do not therefore see how I can act differently from others, for if I did so I should be very singular, and should probably be a loser through my scrupulosity." Yes, but the customs of men are not the standard of right. 2. Note again, if a sin of ignorance renders us guilty, what must a wilful sin do? Do you not perceive at once how the law is again set on high by this? 3. Thus again, by the teaching of our text, men were driven to study the law: for if they were at all right-hearted they said, "Let us know what God would have us do. We do not wish to be leaving His commands undone, or committing transgressions against His prohibitory precepts through not knowing better." 4. And you will see at once that this would lead every earnest Israelite to teach his children God's law, lest his son should err through ignorance or inadvertence. Fear of committing sins of ignorance was a spur to national education, and tended greatly to make all Israel honour the law of the Lord. 5. I close these thoughts by noting that to me the sin-revealing power of the law is wonderfully displayed as I read my text. What a law is this by which men are bound! How severe and searching! How holy and how pure must God Himself be! II. By the teaching of the text **THE CONSCIENCE IS AROUSED**. 1. Our ignorance is evidently very great. As the conies swarm in the holes of the rocks, the bats in the sunless caves of the earth, and the fish in the deep abysses of the sea, so do our sins swarm in the hidden parts of our nature. "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse Thou me from secret faults!" 2. The ignorance of very many persons is to a large degree wilful. Many do not read the Bible at all, or very seldom, and then without desiring to know its meaning. Even some professing Christians take their religion from the monthly magazine, or some standard book written by a human author and adopted by their sect, but few go to the Word of God itself; they are content to drink of the muddled streams of human teaching instead of filling their cups at the crystal fount of revelation itself. Now, if ye be ignorant of anything concerning God's mind and will, it is not, in the case of any of you, for want of the Book, nor for want of a willing guide to instruct you in it; for, behold, the Holy Spirit waiteth to be gracious to you in this respect. Break in, O light eternal! Break in upon the dimness of our ignorance. 3. Now it will be vain for any man to say in his mind, as I fear some will do, "God is hard in thus dealing with us." If thou sayest thus, O man, I ask thee to remember God's answer. Christ puts your rebellious speech into the mouth of the unfaithful one who hid his talent. Wiser far is it to submit and crave for mercy. 4. Let us recollect, in order that our doctrine may appear less strange, that it is according to the analogy of nature that when God's laws are broken, ignorance of those laws should not prevent the penalty falling upon the offenders. 5. It is of necessity that it should be according to this declaration. It is not possible that ignorance should be a justification of sin; for, first, if it were so, it would follow that the more ignorant a man was the more innocent he would be. If, again, the guilt of an action depended entirely upon a man's knowledge, we should have no fixed standard at all by which to judge right and wrong; it would be variable according to the enlightenment of each man, and there would be no ultimate and infallible court of appeal. Moreover, ignorance of the law of God is itself a breach of law, since we are bidden to know and remember it. Can it be possible, then, that one sin is to be an excuse for another? If sins of ignorance are not sins, then Christ's intercession was altogether a superfluity. 6. Once again, I am sure that many of us now present must have felt the truth of this in our own hearts. You who love the Lord and hate unrighteousness, must in your lives have come to a point of greater illumination, where you have said, "I see a certain action to be wrong; I have been doing it for years, but God knows I would not have done it if I had thought it wrong. Even now I see that other people are doing it, and thinking it right; but I cannot do so any more; my conscience has at last received new light, and I must make a change at once." In such circumstances did it ever come to your mind to say, "What I have done was not wrong, because I did not know it to be wrong"? Far from it. You have justly said to yourself, "My sin in this matter is not so great as if I had transgressed wilfully with my eyes open, knowing it to be sin"; but yet you have accused yourself of the fault and mourned over it. III. By the grand and awful truth of the text **THE SACRIFICE IS ENDEARED**. Just according to

our sense of sin must be our value of the sacrifice. God's way of delivering those who sinned ignorantly was not by denying their sin and passing it over, but by accepting an atonement for it. Under the law this atonement was to be a ram without blemish. Our Lord had no sin, nor shade of sin. He is the spotless victim which the law requires. All that justice, in its most severe mood, could require from man by way of penalty our Lord Jesus Christ has rendered; for in addition to His sacrifice for the sin, He has presented a recompense for the damage, as the person who sinned ignorantly was bound to do. He has recompensed the honour of God, and He has recompensed every man whom we have injured. Has another injured you? Well, since Christ has given Himself to you, there is a full recompense made to you, even as there has been made to God. We may rest in this sacrifice. How supremely efficacious it is. It takes away iniquity, transgression, and sin. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Ignorance may be culpable*:—Some years ago through the mistake of a signalman an accident took place on the Metropolitan Railway, by which several persons lost their lives. At the inquiry it transpired that the signalman had in his possession a book of instructions which if they had been attended to the accident could not have occurred, but this book he confessed he had never read, hence the terrible accident. How many of the sins of professing Christians may be traced to similar culpable ignorance! *Knowledge of God's law to be cultivated*:—A kindred error is that a man does right when he obeys his conscience—does what his conscience tells him is right; in other words, does what he thinks is right. If this be true then Saul was right when he made havoc of the Church, for he verily thought he was doing God service. We are, no doubt, bound to do what we think is right; but we are under equal obligations to have our thinking in regard to duty correct. God has given us reason, moral powers, and revelation that we may know our duty and do it. The intellect needs training that it may perceive what is true. The conscience needs training that it may perceive what is true; in other words, the mind's power of perceiving both scientific and moral truth needs cultivating. It may err in regard to scientific truth. It may err in regard to moral truth. In regard to the latter we have an infallible standard in the Word of God, which, if rightly applied, will relieve us from error. We see why the Bible attaches so much importance to a knowledge of the truth. It is the condition of right perception in regard to duty.

CHAPTER VI.

VERS. 2-7. Bring his trespass-offering.—*Christ the true Trespass-offering*:—In Christ Jesus, the true Trespass-offering, God has provided an offering after His own estimation. "Restitution," "compensation," and "expiation"—all are found in Him. When He gave His life a ransom for many, the fullest satisfaction was made to God and man. Both had been trespassed against, and both could now say, "I am satisfied. I have all back and more." As God and man had shared in the wrong inflicted by the trespass of the latter, so there is this blessed community, so to speak, in the offering by which the wrong is put away. God is glorified in "Christ crucified." A crucified Christ is our glory. "Christ is God's," and God's Christ is ours. Such is the wondrous mystery of grace displayed in the aspect of redemption furnished by the trespass-offering. Well may we exclaim with the apostle, "Oh, the depth of the riches, &c., both of the wisdom and knowledge of God—how unsearchable are His judgments, and His works past finding out,"—how comforting is the assurance that one day we shall know these things as we cannot know them now. (*F. H. White.*) *Social sins and their Godward aspect*:—I can conceive no law more beautiful, more impartial, more fitted to do the highest good, than the very first requirement with which this chapter begins: "If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the Lord." But mark what constitutes a trespass against the Lord. It consists in "lying to his neighbour," or in that which was delivered to him to keep, or in fellowship, or in taking anything away from his neighbour by violence. Now, in doing so, he commits a trespass against the Lord: the injury is done against his neighbour, but in its rebound it is sin against God. Every deed of injustice, whether it break the last six commandments or the first four, is sin against God—if it be one of the last six commandments of the law, it has in it two aspects:

one aspect towards man, or injury done to man—a neighbour; and its aspect towards God, or sin committed against Him. We never sin against each other—we do injury to each other—but, when we do so, we sin always against God. And hence the distinction is so important—especially in these days when errors are abroad—that the person against whom the thing is done can forgive in the thing which relates to him: if I steal, or if I injure or wound the neighbour, he from whom I plunder can forgive me the injury, because he is injured and the owner; but the sin that underlies the injury, reaching to God, God alone can forgive. See, too, how very comprehensive the law is—"shall sin in that which was delivered him to keep." Are you made a trustee?—is property deposited with you?—are you a banker?—has some client left his money in your hands? Then it is your duty to be faithful; it is your duty to remember that the least breach of that trust is injury against your neighbour and sin against your God. "Or in fellowship"—that is, as we call it in modern days, "in partnership." Are you a partner in a house of business? You are bound to look to your co-partner's interests as if they were your own; and your co-partner is bound to look to your interests just as if they were his. "Or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbour," such a one commits sin. "Or hath found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely." Among the Romans, it was always regarded as theft to appropriate anything you found upon the streets, whether you could find the owner of it or not: and this law here says—from which that was evidently a reflection—that if you find anything of which you cannot find the owner, or if you find anything and know the owner, and either conceal it, or deny it, or swear falsely concerning it, all that is sin against God. "Then it shall be, because he hath sinned and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found, or all that about which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the principal"—that is, the sum itself—"and shall add"—not as an atonement, but as what may be fairly due—"the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth." And then, not only was he to do so, but he was also to do it at the time of his confession and his trespass-offering made by the priest. The sin was forgiven through the trespass-offering as a type of Christ's atonement; the injury against the brother was rectified by returning the principal, and a fifth of the principal added to it, and receiving from that brother he had injured his forgiveness. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *All sins are against God*:—When a man defrauds you in weight he sins against you, not against the scales, which are only the instruments of determining true and false weight. When men sin it is against God, and not against His law, which is but the indicator of right and wrong. You care little for sins against God's law. Now, every sin that you commit is personal to God, and not merely an infraction of His law. It is casting javelins and arrows of base desire into His loving bosom. I think no truth can be discovered which would be so powerful upon the moral sense of men as that which should disclose to them that sinning is always a personal offence against a personal God. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Refusing to deceive*:—A young man came to a gentleman one day with a case of conscience. He was corresponding clerk in a flourishing house of business. His employers had begun to direct him to write letters to customers containing statements which he and they knew to be false. He had objected, and they said: "We are responsible for these statements; it is nothing to you whether they are true or false." I said to him, "Did they sign the letters, or ask you to write them in your own name?" As soon as the question left my lips I saw that if there were a difference both would be wrong, and I hastened to tell him so. He said, "I have to sign them with my name, per Messrs. Blank." I said, "Your case is clear; you must decline to do it." He said, "Then I shall be dismissed"; and, after a pause, "I have a wife and family." I replied, "My dear friend, this is a trial of faith and principle; you must do right, and trust to God to take care of you and your family." I met him some days after. "Well Mr. —," I said, "how are you getting on?" He replied, "I am still in my situation; I had an interview with the partners, and told them I could not write letters I knew to be untrue. They were very angry, and I expected to receive notice, but I have not received it yet." Months passed, and he remained in his situation. After a while he called upon me, and I saw in his face that something had happened. "Well, Mr. —," I said, "have you had your dismissal?" "No," he said, "I have not," and smiled. "What then?" "A very confidential post in their service, with a higher salary, has fallen vacant, and they have put me into it." On second

thoughts these unprincipled men had come to the conclusion that a clerk who would not deceive a customer would not deceive them, and was too valuable to be lost.

Fruits of deceit :—There is an old story of a Frenchman who persuaded some Missouri Indians to exchange fur for gunpowder, representing that they could obtain a fine crop by sowing it. The Indians prepared a field, and sowed the powder, and set a guard to watch it. As it did not come up they saw that they had been deceived. Some time after the partner of the deceiver visited these Indians with a large stock of goods for the purpose of trade. The Indians each took such things as pleased him, till all were gone. The Frenchman went to the head chief and demanded redress. The chief assured him that full justice should be done as soon as the harvest of gunpowder should be gathered. This was poor consolation for his loss, but such a rebuke as his partner's perfidy deserved. (*S. S. Chronicle*.)

A boy's temptation resisted :—For two years had sailor Ben been off on the sea. Now his ship touched the shore, and his heart was full of joy. When he said good-bye to his mother he was a wild, careless boy; but in the rough days and stormy nights on the water he had learned not only to love his mother better, but to love and serve the God she loved. So he longed to go to her and tell her of this joy. Once on shore he hurried to buy a gift for her; a silver purse with long silver fringe, and into it he counted twenty gold dollars. "I'll make your heart glad in more ways than one, mother," he said, as he snapped the clasp and bounded over the rocks to the ship, for this was to be his last night on board for many months. In his haste his foot slipped, and he fell heavily, bruising his head, spraining his wrist, and the precious purse was flung out of his hands down out of sight to the rocks below. Poor Ben! Never thinking of his bruises he climbed down, searching for his treasure till the night closed about him, then slowly with an aching heart he went back to his ship. But there was a boy whose name was Aleck, and who early every morning swung himself down among the rocks to hunt for the eggs the sea-birds leave in their nests. The next morning he caught sight of something he never saw before in any nest, and eagerly grasped it. It is Ben's silver purse! No more eggs for Aleck to-day; but with his treasure safe in his pocket he climbs up the rope to show his riches to his mother. Up on the rocks he meets sailor Ben, with limping gait and anxious face, searching for his purse. "My boy, I'll give you the brightest gold dollar you ever put your eyes on if you'll find the purse I lost here last night. It was for my old mother. It will break my heart to go home without it!" For a minute there was a battle fierce and terrible in Aleck's heart. Was not the purse his? He had found it. His mother needed the gold as much as Ben's mother; but would she ever touch it if she knew he had kept it from its rightful owner? No, he knew what she would bid him do, and laying the purse in Ben's hands he gained the victory, the battle was over. And so while Ben was rattling along in the coach, happy to pour into his mother's lap the gold he had saved for her, in the little cottage among the trees, Aleck was telling his mother the story of his temptation. "Better an honest heart, my boy, than all the gold and silver in the land." (*Christian Age*.)

Harm done by trespass :—I. THE INJURY WROUGHT BY TRESPASS. 1. Trespass defined. Actual wrong and robbery. 2. Trespass conditioned. Might be wrought "in ignorance." 3. Trespass weighed. By the Word of God. 4. Trespass recognised (ver. 4). II. THE REPARATION MADE FOR TRESPASS. 1. Trespass atoned. 2. Trespass compensated. (1) Judgment inflicted. (2) Injury compensated. (3) Dues exceeded. There was in Christ's obedience an excess of merit presented to God, passing beyond man's demerit. And in Christian devotedness and ministry there are blessings brought to men by man far more sacred, tender, consolatory, and helpful, which more than outweigh all the injury done to men by man. (*W. H. Jellie*.)

Lessons :—1. Of careful attention to be given unto the Word of God (ver. 1). 2. To restore things that are lost (ver. 4). 3. Not to make a schism in the Church (ver. 16). 4. That in the morning we should first think of God, and give Him praise. 5. The merciful man shall obtain mercy by his prayers. (*A. Willet, D.D.*)

That which was delivered him to keep.—*Depositing property* :—I. A NEIGHBOURLY CONVENIENCE. 1. How helpful a neighbour may become. 2. How grand is this confidence in another. 3. How mutually dependent we are one upon another. 4. How honourable we should be in all transactions. 5. How jealously we should strive to merit implicit trust. II. A HAZARDOUS TRANSACTION. 1. Man's reliability is sorely discredited by continuous breaches of faith. 2. Treasure becomes often a serious anxiety to its possessor. 3. No security can be guaranteed in any earthly confidence. III. A DOUBTFUL ALTERNATIVE. There was another method adopted, when a man was about to journey, if he could not trust his neighbour: he would

conceal his treasures underground. IV. A SPIRITUAL ANALOGY. This committing treasure to a neighbour suggests Paul's imagery of the soul committed to Christ (2 Tim. i. 12, see also vers. 14, and Tim. vi. 20). 1. Christ is faithful to our trust. 2. We cannot safely risk our souls in other keeping. (*W. H. Jellie.*) *Custody of treasure*:—To deposit valuable property with a neighbour was, and still is, a common practice in the East where no responsible establishments exist for the reception of private treasure. Hence, when a man went on a journey, he concealed his precious things underground. This was connected with the danger of forgetting the spot where they were hidden, when search and digging had to be resorted to. This not only accounts for the fact that treasure is called in Hebrew by a name which denotes "hidden," or things which men are in the habit of hiding underground, but explains such allusions as "hidden riches of secret places" (Isa. xlv. 3), "and searchest for her as for hid treasure" (Prov. ii. 4), "dig for it more than for hid treasure" (Job iii. 21). To avoid this danger, men entrusted their treasure to the custody of a neighbour. It is to this practice that the text refers, and it is from this practice that the apostle took the expression in 2 Tim. i. 12; see also ver. 14, and 1 Tim. vi. 20). (*C. D. Ginsburg, LL.D.*) *Found that which was lost.*—*Restoration of lost property*:—Nauhaught was an Indian deacon of a native Christian Church in America. He was a poor, hard-working trapper, with a sick wife and child. One night he dreamed that an angel came to him and dropped in his hand "a fair, broad gold piece, in the name of God." When he rose that morning he went out into the wilderness to examine his traps; but neither beast nor bird had been caught in the toils, and poor Nauhaught grieved sorely over his misfortunes as he thought of the bare home and the needs of his sick wife. While praying that God would send the angel of his dream to help him in his dire distress, his feet touched something hard amid the grass, and there lay a purse filled with gold.

So, then, the dream was true,
The angel brought one broad piece only;
Should he take all these?

He was sorely tempted to conceal and appropriate his prize. The thing was so easy. No one need know he had found the purse, and all the wants of his needy family could be at once supplied. But his conscience stirred within him like the voice of God:—

Nauhaught, be a man.
Starve, if need be, but while you live, look out
From honest eyes on all men unashamed.

So the Indian deacon, mindful of the Divine voice, walked bravely back to the hamlet, asking, as he went, if any one had lost anything that day. "I," said a voice, "ten gold pieces in a silken purse." On which Nauhaught at once gave up the purse, and walked away, as poor as ever in pocket, but far richer and stronger in soul through the conflict, in which right had won the victory. The sea captain to whom the lost property had been restored, however, called him back, and begged him to accept a tithe of the prize he had found. This was one gold piece. He took it, and recognising here the very fulfilment of his dream, he gave God thanks. The people told him afterwards who this seaman was, and how well known all around the coast. He answered, with a wise smile—to himself: "I saw the angel, where they saw a man." *He shall restore it.*—*Restitution*:—To wrong man is to dishonour God. To lie to a neighbour, or to deceive him, is to "commit a trespass against the Lord." Yet how little is this thought of! Few regard in any such light as this the ten thousand little injustices and over-exactions of which men, in many of the conditions of life, are guilty towards others. But no such acts are overlooked by God. He is as observant of your conduct towards your fellow-men as towards Himself. God requires restitution to be made to Himself when defrauded or wronged by men in the sins which they commit. We therefore read (chap. v. 15, 16). God is wronged by every sin of man. On every such occasion there is withheld from Him what is His due. And yet He will have His claims met. But by whom is the fulfilment to be made? Not by the sinner himself. He is insolvent, and cannot satisfy the first and easiest demand of his Great Creditor. But what he himself is powerless to do can be done to the full by his Divine Substitute. Yes, Man—the Man Christ Jesus, makes awards for harm which those for whom He acts have done. He restores the principal, and with it gives the addition which God

requires. He fulfils all righteousness, and yields to God a greater glory and pleasure by the obedience He renders and the character He exemplifies than would have been rendered by mankind at large, even had they never known sin. The restitution on which I wish specially to fix attention is that which has to be made to defrauded and injured man. It is impossible to keep one's eyes and ears open to what is going on in the worlds of politics, commerce, and social life, and not feel that there is nothing that more needs to be urged and performed than restitution. The extent to which overreaching, undue exaction, and unjust dealing are practised is almost beyond what words can express. This was very wonderfully disclosed by the results of some sermons on Restitution, which the late Dr. Finney, of America, delivered in this country some years ago. Moneys were sent to him, varying in sums from one shilling to a hundred pounds, with the names and addresses of the persons to whom they were to be delivered, and to whom they were due. So convicted and miserable were the persons who thus acted in the remembrance of the dishonesties of which they had been guilty, that they could find no relief until restitution according to the Divine command had been made. But that was not all, nor the worst. They could not gain the ear of the Most High (Matt. v. 23, 24). God is a God of truth, and cannot give countenance to falsehood: of justice, and cannot even seemingly make any compromise with dishonesty and oppression. He cannot give heed to the prayer of the injurer of his brethren, nor fill with good the heart and hand of the dishonest. They are "the upright," says David, whom He allows to "dwell in His presence" (Psa. cxl. 13), to whom He does good, and who are His delight. Men of an opposite character yield Him no pleasure, and are debarred from the privileges of His people. But let the necessary reparation be made, and the required restitution be rendered, and yours will be the privilege of those whom the Lord accepts and honours. Standing right with men, in the matter under consideration, you will have rightness of relationship to the God of justice and truth. It is thus first restitution, then reconciliation. The condition on which God admits the wrongdoer to the place of privilege in His presence, is the restoration of what he has by false means taken from another. In the case of defrauding God, it is first sacrifice, then restitution; in the case of wronging man, it is first restitution, then sacrifice. And yet it is only when the sin which the wrong-doing implies is forgiven that the wrong-doing itself is repaired. It is accordingly only when the man who has injured his neighbour is convicted of the evil done, and sees it in the all-revealing light of the Divine presence, that he repairs to the injured with "the principal" and "the fifth part" in his hand. You may more than satisfy the man that has been wronged; but that will not satisfy God. Sin can be answered for only by the Cross; and the defilement it leaves behind on the soul can only be removed by the blood of cleansing. But bring to God the sacrifice of expiation, and offer to Him His Christ as your plea for the acceptance you require and wish, and you render to Him, in full, the restitution which He demands. (*Jas. Fleming, D.D.*) *Restitution*:—An extensive hardware merchant in one of the Fulton Street prayer-meetings in New York appealed to his brother merchants to have the same religion for "down-town" as they had for "up-town"; for the week-day as for the Sabbath; for the counting-house as for the communion-table. After the meeting a manufacturer with whom he had dealt largely accosted him. "You did not know," said he, "that I was at the meeting and heard your remarks. I have for the last five years been in the habit of charging you more for goods than other purchasers. I want you to take your books and charge back to me so much per cent. on every bill of goods you have had of me for the five past years." A few days later the same hardware merchant had occasion to acknowledge the payment of a debt of several hundred dollars which had been due for twenty-eight years from a man who could as easily have paid it twenty-four years before. (*Family Treasury*.) *Reparation by restitution*:—Another way of being rid of guilt is by making handsome reparation to the injured party—a handsome, genuine recognition and reparation, such as Jacob made to Esau, or David to Bathsheba, or Zacchæus to the widows and orphans of Judea. It is a step out of sin towards the God of truth and honesty, and towards Jesus Christ. Your agonies over cases of conscience and want of peace may lie there—that you have never made reparation. Oh, we know about it. God is not mocked. You cannot have the peace of conscience of a saint while living in dishonesty. You'll sleep better, and enjoy your food better, and the air of June will be round you in mid-January the day you make reparation. That will slacken the bonds of conscience, though it will not take them off. It is a sweet thing to do, though desperately hard to begin.

I know it because I've done it—there are people here to whom I've made reparation, and I'm going to make more. The faith of some is scandalised by seeing you come to the prayer-meeting, he or she knowing what reparation you have made. Go and say, "I have not only to pay thee for the past, but here are arrears of interest." Try it; it will make you twenty years younger. There is no more mischievous doctrine than the Antinomianism which makes men blink at common honesty and cover up falsehood with Evangelicalism. God will not do it. The minister may come and pronounce a benediction on your sophistries, but it will not do. I am dwelling long on this, though not a moment too much for some men here. Make reparation. (*A. Wylie.*) *Confession and restitution*:—We may here relate an incident from the life of a disciple of Jesus Christ who had been richly blessed. When he was a student he was absorbed in the things of this world, but soon afterwards yielded to the Spirit of God, and was led to his Redeemer. He became, in reality, another man. But, as often happens, the friends and acquaintances of his "jolly student days" could not understand the change, and the only conclusion they could come to was that "N— had turned hypocrite." Now it happened that N— had, while he was a student, taken away from one of his friends a paper-knife, which the owner set great store by. When, after his conversion to a new life, his eye happened one day to fall on the knife, his conscience smote him for his sin in taking it. The Spirit of God gave him no rest, urging him to take back the knife to its true owner, and acknowledge his sin. "Oh," said the man to us, "that was a hard step to take! I was willing enough to part with the knife, and would have given up a thousand knives, but I trembled when I thought—'he regards you already as a hypocrite, and what will he think now?' But I went to him and confessed with trembling lips, and—what happened? He took my hand, with tears in his eyes, and said, 'Now I see that there is something genuine in your conversion. I respect you now, and would gladly be as you are.'" (*Otto Funcke.*)

Vers. 8, 9. The law of the burnt offering.—*The law of the burnt-offering*:—The Holy One speaks again from the Holy Place. He now tells some of the more awful thoughts of His soul. His words reveal views of sin and righteousness that appear overwhelmingly awful to men. His eternal justice, flaming forth against all iniquity, is declared to Israel in the fire of the altar. This fire is never to be extinguished; "for every one of His righteous judgments endureth for ever" (*Psa. cxix. 160*). It burns all night long—an emblem of the sleeplessness of hell, where "they have no rest, day nor night"—and of the ever-watchful eye of righteousness that looks down on this earth. Perhaps it was intended to exhibit two things: 1. "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever," &c. (*Rev. xiv. 10*, compared with *ver. 18*). The whole camp saw this fire burning in the open court all night long. "So shall you perish," might an Israelitish father say to his children, taking them to his tent door, and pointing them, in the gloom and silence of night, to the altar, "So shall you perish, and be for ever in the flames, unless you repent!" 2. It exhibited, also, the way of escape. See, there is a victim on the altar, on which these flames feed! Here is Christ in our room. His suffering, seen and accepted by the Father, was held forth continually to the faith of Israel, night and day. And upon that type, the pledge and token of the real sacrifice, did the eye of the Father delight to rest night and day. It pleased Him well to see His justice and His love thus met together there. And the man of Israel, who understood the type, slept in peace, sustained by this truth which the struggling rays from the altar gleamed into his tent. (*A. A. Bonar.*)

Vers. 10–12. The priest shall put on his linen garment.—*Sacred attire*:—I. IN HOLY ATTIRE THEY SERVE AT THE ALTAR. 1. Suggestive of the essential holiness of Christ. 2. Symbolic of their derived purity and righteousness. 3. Indicative of the spirit of service. II. IN ALTERED GARMENTS THEY BEAR THE ASHES FROM THE SANCTUARY. 1. The changed tone of feeling in the ministrant. 2. The altered scenes which a Christian frequents. (*W. H. Jellie.*) *The priest's garments*:—The linen garment is the type of purity, as we see in the Book of Revelation *xix. 8*. The priest is the emblem of the Redeemer in his perfect purity coming to the work of atonement. The word for garment means a suit of clothes. It takes in the linen breeches, as well as all the other parts of the priest's dress. His whole suit is to be the garb of purity. It is not glory; these are not the "golden garments." It is holy humanity; it is Jesus in humiliation, but without one stain of sin. There is a special reason for the direction as to the linen breeches. It is meant to

denote the completeness of the purity that clothes him; it clothes him to his very skin, and "covers the flesh of his nakedness" (Exod. xxviii. 42). It was not only our unrighteousness and our corrupt nature that Jesus was free from, but also from that other part of our original sin which consists in the imputed guilt of Adam. The linen breeches that "covered the nakedness" of the priest, lead us back at once to our first parents' sin, when they were naked and ashamed in the garden, after the Fall. Here we see this sin also covered. (*A. A. Bonar.*) Take up the ashes.—*"He shall take up the ashes which the fire has consumed"* :—By the figure which grammarians call ellipsis, or breviloquence, "ashes" is used for the material out of which ashes came, as Isa. xlvii. 2, speaks of grinding "meal" (Ainsworth). The wood was underneath the burnt-offering. This being done, the ashes were to be placed by themselves, for a little time, "beside the altar." All eyes would thus see them and take notice of them, before they were carried out into a clean place. Probably there were two reasons for this action. 1. The fire was thus kept clear and bright, the ashes being removed. God thereby taught them that He was not careless as to this matter, but required that the type of His justice should be kept full and unobscured. 2. The ashes were shown for the purpose of making it manifest that the flame had not spared the victim, but had turned it into ashes. It was not a mere threatening when the angels foretold that Sodom and Gomorrah were to be destroyed for their sin; their doom (2 Pet. ii. 6) is declared to have come on them, "turning them to ashes." So here, all that was threatened is fulfilled. There the ashes lie; any eye may see them. The vengeance has been accomplished! The sacrifice is turned into ashes! Justice has found its object! The Lord's arrows are not pointless; He performs all His threatenings, for He is holy. "O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto Thee? or to Thy faithfulness round about Thee?" (*Ibid.*) **Burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt-offering in order upon it.**—*The daily sacrifice* :—By no Levitical rite or service was Christ, as "the Lamb of God," more perfectly typified, than by the daily sacrifice. It significantly prefigured Him in His death, the satisfaction He yielded to the Father, and His intercession in behalf of men. It is Christ, then, that we have here; and—I. IN THE PERFECTION OF HIS CHARACTER. The lamb was without spot; and He was without blemish. And this is what He needed to be. And yet He was more. He was marked not only for the absence of all defect, but for the presence of every excellence. He was absolutely and universally perfect. This was the case with the affections He cherished, the dispositions He cultivated, and the virtues He practised. Only what is perfect can satisfy an infinitely perfect God. All, therefore, that is defective and unholiness is forbidden a place on His altar. God's requirement extends to what is internal as well as to what is external. He demands "truth in the inward parts" as well as integrity in the outward life. The demand was fully met by Jesus. But what God required in the offering, He required also in those for whom it was presented. Only as we are personally what God requires, in righteousness of walk before Him, can we occupy the position to which we are invited, appreciate and enjoy the blessings of salvation, and fulfil the purposes of our high calling. But we may be that; provision for our being so has been made. Strengthened, therefore, with might by the Spirit in the inner man, there is no duty that we may not fulfil, and no appropriation of offered blessing that we may not make. But God not only strengthens for service; He Himself works in us, and for us, and by us—leading us to will and to do according to His good pleasure. II. We have Christ here in His COMPLETENESS OF DEDICATION TO THE FATHER AND TO MEN. The lambs were, with the exception of the skin, wholly consumed by the fire; and Christ gave Himself to God for us. The primary object of His incarnation and mission to earth was—to glorify the Father. The path might be rugged, but leading to the glory of the Father, He cheerfully trod it; the Cross might be ignominious, but ensuring the glory of the Father, He gave Himself up to it. He made of Himself a whole burnt-offering to God. But it was a twofold gift He made of Himself when He laid Himself upon the altar. "He gave Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. v. 2). "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." One of the purposes for which He became our substitute, delivered us from the dominion of evil, and endured us with Divine strength, was, that we might walk in His steps, and, in our measure, yield ourselves to God as He did. But is this being done? It is on record that, during the late civil war in America, and when victory was swaying from side to side, that commissioners from the Confederate States sought and obtained an interview with the President Lincoln, with the view of trying to effect an arrangement for the

independence of the territory they represented. They knew the tender-heartedness of Mr. Lincoln, and appealed to him to stay the effusion of blood which, at the moment, was flowing in torrents. They were willing to forego several of the States for which they had hitherto fought, if he would consent to the remainder being independent. They pleaded with him for hours, and made use of the strongest arguments and considerations they could adduce to gain their object. When they had finished, the president, who had patiently listened to all that had been said, raised his hand, and then bringing it down with emphasis on the map which lay before him, replied, "Gentlemen, this Government must have the whole." And so God says, regarding the inner kingdom of every human heart. He will allow no partition or division there. The whole is His by right, and He will suffer no one to share with Him the throne He has erected for His own occupancy. III. By the daily burnt-offering we are minded of CHRIST'S ACCEPTABLENESS TO THE FATHER. The lamb was an offering of a sweet savour unto God, in which He had delight, and from which He derived satisfaction. And He was ever pleased with Christ. But is this remembered as it should be? Christ is much more thought of as providing for men's necessities than for God's requirements; as appeasing justice than as giving delight to Him from whom He came; as ministering peace to the troubled than as satisfying the Father's heart. But what Christ was to God, believers are intended to be, in their measure, also. Is this now, to any extent, the case? Has God satisfaction in all who call themselves by the name of His Son? Has He joy in that which you lay upon His altar, in the services that you fulfil, and in the measure of resemblance which you bear to His Beloved? Then Christ is brought before us here in the position He ever occupies on our behalf. A lamb was always before God, and Christ ever liveth to make intercession for us. Now, where Christ is in reference to the Father He ought to be in reference to all who bear His name. Only as this is the case, as He is ever before you, occupying the vision of your faith, filling the sphere of your life, and engaging your feelings and thoughts, will you become assimilated to His likeness and meet for His presence and glory above. (*Jas. Fleming, D.D.*)

Ver. 13. **The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar.**—*Divine fire humanly maintained*:—I. DIVINE ENDOWMENTS COMMITTED TO THE CONTROL OF MEN. As in the instances of that "fire," supernaturally originated on that altar, and then left in man's hands, so with—1. Pure sympathies implanted within man. 2. Revelation in the Scriptures. 3. Quickened life in the regenerated soul. 4. Spiritual endowments to the believer. 5. Sacred affections in the Christian heart. 6. Holy enthusiasm firing an earnest nature. From God they come: but man has them in his hands. II. DIVINE ENDOWMENTS ENTRUSTED TO THE PRESERVATION OF MEN. The priests had to keep that "fire" alive, or it would expire. 1. Having received the gifts of God we are responsible for their maintenance. 2. How solemn the priestly office, which all are called to perform: feeding the Divine "fire" in our souls continually! III. DIVINE ENDOWMENTS REQUIRING THE CO-OPERATIVE WATCHFULNESS OF MEN. The priest's eye would need to be often turned to the altar fire: "every morning" it needed care. 1. A watchful life is imperative if we would maintain godliness within. 2. Neglect will allow the extinction of the Divineness gift. Only neglect—(1) daily prayer; (2) daily reading of the Scriptures; (3) daily fellowship with Christ; (4) daily watching against temptation. Fail in these duties, and the "fire" will expire. "Every morning" bring wood to the fire! IV. DIVINE ENDOWMENTS ENDURING ONLY WHERE ACTIVELY MAINTAINED. That fire did expire! At the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar. 1. May the Divine life in a soul go out? 2. May the Christian's "first love" become extinct? 3. May the holy aspirations of a child of God droop? 4. May all sacred ardour, in prayer, in consecration, die away? "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling." "See that ye make your calling and election sure." (*W. H. Jellie.*) *The fire upon the altar*:—"The fire shall ever be burning." I take the words as typical of our common life, and its common duties and opportunities. It is only a shallow mind that can think without being awed of the privilege or the responsibility which belongs to us as custodians of a light that may be dimmed or desecrated in our keeping, but cannot die; so much stronger is it and more enduring than ourselves. Yet the words suggest, too, that if our life be as the fire, it must be as the fire in its intensity and purity. It is not worth having if it is dull and cold and heartless, if it is not enkindled with zeal and generosity. I. THE FIRE OF ENTHUSIASM. It was said of Sir Walter Raleigh, "He can toil terribly"; and I think, if the great souls

of the past could speak to you in tones that would command your interest, they would say that whatever good they did upon earth was achieved at the cost of strong resolve and strenuous effort. II. THE FIRE OF INDIGNATION. It is not enough, right as it is, to love what is good. We must hate, we must spurn the evil. The wicked are always a discredited minority; and if the good had only the courage of their opinions, the wicked would never have the courage of theirs.

III. THE FIRE OF PERSONAL SANCTITY. The flame which consumes the dross of the world must itself be bright and beautiful. It must be "a burning and a shining light." Yes, and it must be "ever burning"; it must "never go out." It was the law of the Vestal Virgins in old time that night and day they should watch with sleepless care the everlasting fire upon the altar of the goddess. No calamity that could happen to the State was so terrible as if through their fault that fire should become extinct. But there was one essential condition of their watching: they must themselves be chaste; should any one of them break the Divine law of chastity, it was death for her and for him who made her break it. And oh! let us resolve that "the fire shall ever be burning upon the altar" of this school, which is so dear to us. Let it be bright, fierce, and lambent. Let it burn away the selfishness which lies at the heart of so many an one who knows it not. (*J. E. C. Weldon, M.A.*)

Habitual piety:—I. PIETY MUST BE HABITUAL TO PROVE THAT IT IS REAL. 1. Whatever is chief in the heart will be ever showing itself in the life. 2. We shall thus surely and thus only verify and carry out the Scripture descriptions of godliness. II. PIETY MUST BE HABITUAL IN ORDER TO BE PROGRESSIVE. 1. The attainment of holy character is by degrees. 2. These advances can only be attained by constant well-doing. III. PIETY MUST BE HABITUAL IN ORDER TO BE USEFUL. 1. If there be inconsistency or fitfulness, a painful sense of insincerity will be felt by those to whom the truth may be addressed. 2. With habitual piety, how much greater weight, pathos, and earnestness will there be. 3. An unconscious yet speaking power is in such godliness. IV. HABITUAL PIETY GIVES A DIGNITY AND ELEVATION TO THE WHOLE OF LIFE. It was a noble testimony that the son of J. A. James bore of his father: "I never found in him anything inconsistent or unworthy." What a wreath to lay on that honoured tomb! Conclusion: See to it that the fire be ever burning. What Christian workers should we have then—lips touched with a live coal, because the heart is glowing with the sacred flame. What Churches should we have then—not formal and languishing, but strong in godliness and increasing in numbers. What households should we have then—where the younger members would prove their appreciation of devout sincerity and the attractiveness of lofty example. Individual influence would be benign as that of the Australian tree which destroys infection, and breathes health around; and the whole spiritual scene would be beautiful and fragrant, as "a field that the Lord hath blessed." Cherish the sacred fire, if it is within. As the Parsees with the precious sandalwood keep alive the ever-burning flame in their temples, so with precious passages of Divine truth and prayer seek to keep alive and vigorous the flame of love. (*G. McMichael, B.A.*)

The altar fire a symbol of regenerating grace:—1. In its source or origin. 2. In its tendency. 3. In its nature and properties. 4. In its permanency. 5. In its perpetuity. Lesson: Be diligent in the use of the means of grace—1. Prayer: secret, family, social. 2. Study of Bible. 3. Meditation. 4. Attendance on the ordinances. (*G. F. Love.*)

Fuel for heart flames:—"I'll master it," said the axe, and the blows fell heavily on the iron; but every blow made his edge more blunt, till he ceased to strike. "Leave it to me," said the saw, and with relentless teeth he worked backward and forward on its surface until they were all worn down or broken; then he fell aside. "Ha! ha!" said the hammer, "I knew you would not succeed; I'll show you the way." But at his first stroke off flew his head, and the iron remained as before. "Shall I try?" said a flame of fire. They all despised the flame, but he curled gently round the solid bar, and embraced it, and never left it, until, under his irresistible influence, it was so melted as to take the form of any mould you please. If hard hearts are to be won for Jesus, they must be melted, not hammered. No power has been found so effective as love for taking self-trust and self-righteousness out of men. I. LET US SEEK TO FAN THE FLAME. Of the Baptist our Lord said, "he was a burning and a shining light." Blessed eulogy! may it be earned by each one of us. "Burning and shining"—our very ideal of a minister; a hot heart with a clear head; impetuosity and prudence blended; zeal and knowledge linked in holy wedlock. The motto on David Brainerd's banner, and the prayer in his heart, ever was, "Oh, that I were a flaming fire in the service of my God." We have as our

model Him who could say, "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up"; and while we profess to be His followers, we dare not rest satisfied with the "icy torpor" and "decorous coldness" which are, alas! the usual temperature of too many professors. We do not wish to be for ever praying for the smouldering embers to be blown into a flame, for we covet a steady furnace heat, and no mere fitful zeal, which, like the fire from the horse's hoof, dies in the moment of its birth. Most of us know the sad experience of preaching with the fire burning only amid grey ashes. We cannot expect much blessing while this is the case. If the gospel is to have a mighty effect upon the congregation, it must pass through the fire of an intense spiritual life in the preacher; and this life we feel we must have. And what a boon will it be to us also! What purifying force there is in consuming zeal and passionate love of souls! How it burns up all unworthy and selfish motives! This holy fire has also an educating force; by it the soul is transfigured, and made to enjoy a grand outlook. It awakens the intellect as nothing else can; it quickens the sensibilities of inferior minds, and makes them capable of achievements which, without it, they would never have dreamed of. John Howard had no commanding intellect, but what he had was illuminated with Divine light, and thus his name became immortal. Thomas Chalmers had always an intellect so commanding as to grasp a planet in its span; but it needed the grace of God to so illuminate the mind of Chalmers that he could write his astronomical discourses, and grasp, not a planet merely, but myriads of worlds as a boy handles his marbles, and move "like a strong swimmer in a stormy sea." Divine fire in the soul kindles a light in the intellect, elevates every natural faculty, and makes it a handmaid to the Spirit of God; it burns every bond that ties the tongue, and makes men orators who else were dumb. This, too, will give us the most attractive characters. It is said that the slopes of a volcano supply soil so fruitful that the richest vines flourish best upon them; when the heart is full of holy fire the life is sure to be adorned with the rich graces of the Spirit, productive of that fruit which glorifies our Father in heaven. And yet to have the heart throb with a might pulse of love—to have a holy passion thrilling and burning in every artery and vein will, in all probability, involve much trial. Every cherished idol of the heart must submit to the action of this fire. It will consume all that is consumable. Upon sin in the soul it will have no mercy. It will probably involve, too, the scorn of some whose friendship we fain would cultivate. II. LET US NOW GATHER A FEW MATERIALS TO FEED IT. Scientific men are asking, "What is to be the fuel for coming ages?" "What will our great-great-grandchildren sit around instead of our household fire?" One authority suggests as a source of heat, when coal is exhausted, the beating of the tidal wave on the shore. Happily the Christian Church need not trouble herself with any conjectures as to the fuel which is to feed *her* fires. The light and love invested in the covenant of graces ages back will never be exhausted until every elect soul glows with love to God, and every redeemed wanderer is lighted back to his Father's home. Does not even Nature speak to us upon this matter of earnestness in our Master's work? The sun is earnest: in his path he never lingers, in his course he never halts: the stars never falter in their race, never swerve from their round; the sea is constant in its ebb and flow, unchanging in eternal change. All Nature says, "The King's business requires haste"; and the man who is not in earnest when about "the King's business" is out of gear with the universe, and is a blot in the creation of God. Our age speaks to us, we live in the cumulated light of succeeding ages. Our age, too, is telling upon ages yet to be—nay, upon eternity itself. Is there not inspiration, too, in the memory of our early vows? If we would be full of Divine energy, let us labour after a strong sense of the love of God in Christ. All the love of eternity meets here as in a focus, and if we only seek full and deep communion with it our lives will not lack the holy fire. There is one other thought which ought ever to arouse our spirits and inspire our hearts with zeal and courage in our holy warfare. We are on the winning side. Victory is surely ours. (*W. Williams.*) *The fire upon the altar*:—The term "fire" in Scripture language is commonly employed to express the judgment of God upon sin (Heb. xii. 29; Psa. i. 2; 2 Thess. i., &c.); and accordingly, when the Jewish worshipper (the veil being off his heart) contemplated the altar's heaven-kindled flame, and bore in mind the Divine edict for its preservation, he was given to understand that the judgment of God was held in abeyance, that the Divine arrangements for turning aside that judgment from the contrite sinner though revealed to hope, were not consummated in fact, and, that as the fire, day by day, swallowed victim after victim, and burned still as fierce as ever, that victim had

not yet been laid thereon whose blood should quench in mercy the fire maintained in justice. Well—"God is the Lord who hath showed us light; bind the sacrifice with cords, even to the horns of the altar"—the victim has been found and accepted; "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter"; His blood is "shed for many for the remission of sins," and the fire is gone out—God Himself hath "put it out": "for by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," and, "through the offering of the body of Christ once for all," mercy and truth, righteousness and peace have met together, and like the wings of the mystic cherubim, they shadow the mercy-seat of God—the throne of Divine grace. Well, the fire is "gone out"—God Himself hath "put it out," but in so doing He hath kindled another. Accordingly, when the fire of Divine justice died away in the offering up of Christ, the flame of Divine love shot upwards upon the altar-hearts of the Lord's redeemed; it was and is kindled from above, for love begets love, and "we love Him because He first loved us." This is the heavenly fire which kindles upon the altar of the heart, the sacrifice of the affections; it is the fruit of satisfied justice; it is the movement of Divine mercy, besprinkling the soul with the all-awakening, all-cleansing blood of Jesus, producing a responsive movement of the soul to God, by the drawings of the Spirit of grace, and lighting up a flame in its Divinely occupied recesses, not to be extinguished by the deepest waters of trial. "It shall never go out." 1. In time of trial and affliction it shall not go out; for "in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His Tabernacle shall He hide me." 2. In seasons of spiritual depression it shall not go out; "O my God, my soul is cast down within me," &c. 3. In the hour of temptation it shall not go out; "for God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 4. When life, too, is waning, and the night of death is setting in, and the blighting chill is paralysing the frame as it enters the deep and dark river, it shall not go out; for "love is strong as death"; and "many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it." (*H. Hardy, M.A.*)

The continual burnt-offering:—This ordinance reminds us that Christ, as our Burnt-offering, continually offers Himself to God in self-consecration in our behalf. Very significant it is that the burnt-offering stands in contrast in this respect with the sin-offering. We never read of a continual sin-offering; even the great annual sin-offering of the Day of Atonement, which, like the daily burnt-offering, had reference to the nation at large, was soon finished, and once for all. And it was so with reason; for in the nature of the case, our Lord's offering of Himself for sin as an expiatory sacrifice was not and could not be a continuous act. But with His presentation of Himself unto God in full consecration of His person as our Burnt-offering it is different. Throughout the days of His humiliation, this self-offering of Himself to God continued; nor, indeed, can we say it has yet ceased, or ever can cease. For still, as the High Priest of the heavenly Sanctuary, He continually offers Himself as our Burnt-offering in constantly renewed and constantly continued devotement of Himself to the Father to do His will. (*S. H. Kellogg, D.D.*)

The continual burning:—Suppose the sin should cease, would the fire then be put out? Certainly not. The fire has a double significance; it is not there only to consume the sacrifice, it is there to express the continual aspiration of the soul. The fire still burns. There is an unquenchable fire in heaven. Aspiration is the highest expression of character. That is the permanent quantity in the text. Fire ascends; it speechlessly says, "This is not my home; I must travel, I must fly, I must return; the sun calls me, and I must obey." A character without aspiration cannot live healthily and exercise a vital and ennobling influence. When religion becomes mere controversy, it has lost veneration; and whatever or whoever loses veneration slips away from the centre of things, and falls evermore into thickening darkness. There is a philosophy in this conception as well as a theology. To aspire is to grow. "The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out." Then there are two things in the text—"fire" and "altar." We may have an altar, but no fire. That is the deadly possibility; that is the fatal reality. The world is not dying for want of a creed, but for want of faith. We are not in need of more prayers, we are in need of more prayerfulness. If the little knowledge we have—how small it is the wisest men know best of all—were turned to right use, fire in its happiest influences would soon begin to be detected by surrounding neighbours and by unknown observers. Of what avail is it that we have filled the grate with fuel if we have not applied the flame? Does the unlighted fuel warm the chamber? No more does the unsanctified knowledge help to redeem and save

society. We need the fire as well as the altar. What is needed now is a fire that will burn the altar itself—turn the marble and porphyry and granite and hewn soft-stone all into fuel that shall go up in a common oblation to the waiting heavens. We may have fire and no altar, as well as have an altar and no fire. This is also a mistake. We ought to have religious places and Christian observances, locality with special meaning, resting-places with Heaven's welcome written upon their portals. There is a deadly sophism lurking in the supposition that men can have the fire without the altar, and are independent of institutions, churches, families, places, Bibles, and all that is known by Christian arrangement for common worship. We are not meant to be solitary worshippers. When a man says he can read the Bible at home, I deny it. He can partially read it there, he can see some of its meaning there; but society is one, as well as is the individual, in some degrees and in some relations. There is a religion of fellowship as well as of solitude. Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together: there is a touch that helps life to gather itself up into its full force; there is a contagion which makes the heart feel strong in masonry. When a man says he can pray at home, I deny it—except in the sense that he can there partially pray. He can transact part of the commerce which ought to be going on continually between heaven and earth, earth and heaven; but there is a common prayer—the family cry, the congregational intercession, the sense that we are praying for one another in common petition at the throne of grace. It is not enough to kindle a fire: we must renew it. “The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out.” Did not some men burn once who are cold now? Have not some men allowed the holy flame to perish? and is not their life now like a deserted altar laden with cold white ashes? Once they sang sweetly, prayed with eagerness of expectation, worked with both hands diligently, were always open to Christian appeal, focalised their lives in one poignant inquiry—Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? I know of no drearier spectacle than to see a man who still bears the Christian name on the altar of whose heart the fire has gone out. That is a possibility. Lost enthusiasm means lost faith; lost passion means lost conviction. (*J. Parker, D.D.*)

Use of means:—That fire on the altar was lighted originally from heaven; it was lighted, it is supposed, from the bright glory that was in the cloud, and ultimately dwelt in the Tabernacle between the cherubim; but while lighted from heaven it was kept burning by human appliances. God never dispenses with means; He gives grace, and expects us to use means. So that text that many pervert, “My grace is sufficient for you,” some people practically read as if it were, “My grace is a substitute for you.” Now it is not so; it is sufficient for you, but it never will be a substitute for you. God does not canonise indolence. He lights the spark that is in the heart from heaven, and He expects that, by prayer, by reading, by thought, you will keep it constantly burning. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*)

Conscientious performance of holy duties:—Be conscientious in the performance of holy duties. A fire which for awhile shoots up to heaven will faint both in its heat and brightness without fresh supplies of nourishing matter. Bring fresh wood to the altar morning and evening, as the priests were bound, for the nourishment of the holy fire. God in all His promises supposes the use of means. When He promised Ezekiah his life for fifteen years, it cannot be supposed that he should live without eating and exercise. It is both our sin and misery to neglect the means. Therefore let a holy and humble spirit breathe in all our acts of worship. If we once become listless to duty we shall quickly become lifeless in it. If we languish in our duties we shall not long be lively in our graces. (*S. Charnock.*)

The perpetual fire:—So careful is God of this continual burning, that, if you mark, it is reported over and over (see vers. 9, 12). To this end, the priest's care was to feed it with wood, and see to it day and night, and with no other fire might either sacrifice, or incense, be burned and offered to God. This fire was carefully kept upon the altar to the captivity of Babylon, and afterward found again of Neh. ii., 2 Macc. i. 18, 19. Of like from hence might grow that great honour and regard, which the heathens had fire in, whereof we read often. The Athenians in their Prytaneo, and at Delphos, and at Rome, of those Vestal Virgins continual fire was kept, and of many it was worshipped as a God. The Persians called it Orismada, that is, holy fire; and in public pomp they used to carry it before kings with great solemnity. What might be the reason why God appointed this ceremony of continual fire upon the altar, and how may we profit by it? 1. First, there was figured by it the death of Christ from the beginning of the world; namely, that He was the Lamb slain from the beginning for mankind, and by this shadow they were led to

believe that although as yet Christ was not come in the flesh, nevertheless the fruit of His death belonged to them, as well as to those that should live when He came, or was come; for this fire was continual and went not out, no more did the fruit of His passion fail to any true believer, even from the beginning. But they were saved by believing that He should come, as we are now, by believing that He is come. 2. Also this fire came from heaven (chap. ix. 24), and so should Christ in the time appointed. This fire was ever in, and never went out, and so is God ever ready to accept our sacrifices and appointed duties, ever ready to hear us and forgive us, but we are slow and dull, and come not to Him as we ought. 3. No other fire might be used but this, and so they were taught to keep to God's ordinances, and to fly from all inventions of their own heads. For ever it was true, and ever will be true, "In vain do men worship Me, teaching for doctrines men's precepts." Our devices, seem they never so wise, so fit, so holy and excellent, they are strange fire, not that fire that came from heaven, not that fire that God will be pleased withal or endure. This fire coming first from heaven, and thus preserved, still preached unto them by figure, that as well did their sacrifices and services duly performed according to the law please God, as that did when first God sent His fire from heaven to consume it, in token of approbation, which surely was a great comfort to their consciences and a mighty prop to fainting, fearing weak faith. 4. This fire thus maintained and kept with all care, and "not suffered ever to go out," taught them, and still may teach us, to be careful to keep in the fire of God's holy Spirit, that it never die, nor go out within us. The fire is kept in by honest life, as by wood, by true sighs of unfeigned repentance, as by breath or blowing, and by meek humility, as by soft ashes. Oh, that we may have care to keep it in! what should I say? This continued fire taught then, and, though it be now gone and abrogated, may still teach us now, to be careful to keep in, amongst us, the fire of God's Word, the true preaching of His truth, to the salvation of our souls. 5. For the fire hath these properties—it shineth and giveth light, it heateth, it consumeth, it trieth: so the preaching of the gospel. "Thy Word is a lantern unto my feet, and a light unto my path." St. Peter calleth it "a candle in a dark place," and many Scriptures teach the shining light of it. The heat in like sort: "Did not our hearts burn within us, whilst He talked with us, and opened the Scriptures? The fire kindled, and I spake with my tongue," saith the Psalm; and as fire it pleased the Holy Spirit to appear at Pentecost, to show this fruit of effect of the Word preached by their mouths, it heateth the heart to all good life, and maketh us "zealous of good works." The dross of our corruption by degrees it washeth, the stubble of our fancies it "burneth up and consumeth," so that we abhor the sins we have been pleased with, and hate the remembrance of evil passed. 6. Lastly, it trieth doctrine, and severeth truth from error; it trieth men, and discovereth hypocrites. All worthy motives to make us careful to preserve this fire perpetually amongst us whilst we live, and in a holy zeal to provide for it also when we are dead. So shall we live being dead; nay, so shall we assuredly never die, but with immortal souls, and never-dying tongues, praise His name that liveth for ever, and will have us with Him. (*Bp. Babington.*)

A fire easily perpetuated.—At Kildare a memorial fire was kept up in honour of St. Bridget for seven hundred years, and extinguished in the thirteenth century by order of an Archbishop of Dublin. It is easier to keep up the outward fires of superstition than the Divine fire on the altar of the heart.

The constancy of religion.—David Livingstone, who did so much toward opening up the dark continent of Africa, told the following story. When he was a boy, a faithful Christian man called him to his death-bed and said, "My son, make religion the everyday business of your life, and not a thing of fits and starts." Livingstone's life shows that he followed the advice to the day of his death, even to his last hour, which was spent on his knees in prayer to Him to whom he had so often gone for comfort.

Keeping the fire burning.—In Florence good housewives use cakes of vine-refuse to keep the fire in when they are away from home. These cakes cannot yield much heat or create a blaze, but they feed sufficient fire to save lighting it again. Do not many obscure, untalented, but quietly sincere believers answer just this purpose in our churches? In dull and dead times they preserve "the things which remain and are ready to die"; they detain the heavenly flame, which else would quite depart, and though the best they can do is but to smoulder in sorrow at the declension of the times, yet they are not to be despised. When, in happier days, the fire of piety shall burn with renewed energy, we shall be grateful to those who were as the ashes on the hearth, and kept the dying flame alive.

Need for constant piety.—Some Christians are like those

toys they import from France, which have sand in them; the sand runs down, and some little invention turns and works them as long as the sand is running, but when the sand is all out it stops. So on Sunday morning these people are just turned right, and the sand runs, and they work all the Sunday; but the sand runs down by Sunday night, and then they stand still, or else go on with the world's work just as they did before. Oh! this will never do! There must be a living principle; something that shall be a mainspring within; a wheel that cannot help running on, and that does not depend upon external resources. *Rekindling the spiritual fire*:—Epiphanius maketh mention of those that travel by the deserts of Syria, where are nothing but miserable marshes and sands, destitute of all commodities, nothing to be had for love or money; if it so happen that their fire go out by the way then they light it again at the heat of the sun, by the means of a burning-glass or some other device that they have. And thus in the wilderness of this world, if any man have suffered the sparks of Divine grace to die in him, the fire of zeal to go out in his heart, there is no means under the sun to enliven those dead sparks, to kindle that extinguished fire again, but at the Sun of Righteousness, that Fountain of Light, Christ Jesus. (*J. Spencer.*) *Constant light*:—Many hypocrites are like comets, that appear for awhile with a mighty blaze, but are very unsteady and irregular in their motion; their blaze soon disappears, and they appear but once in a great while. But true saints are like fixed stars, which, though they rise and set, and are often clouded, yet are steadfast in their orb, and shine with a constant light. (*Pres. Edwards.*) *A constantly burning lamp*:—Any man or woman, however obscure, whose life is clean, whose words are true, whose intention is to help God in His world, kindles a light which never goes out.

CHAPTER VII.

VERS. 1-10. The law of the trespass-offering.—*Lessons*:—1. The fatness and grossness of the carnal heart is to be removed and taken away. 2. God requires the heart. 3. Against covetousness in ministers. 4. To receive the sacraments reverently and with due preparation. (*A. Willet, D.D.*) *The trespass-offering*:—The trespass-offering may be considered as a variety of the sin-offering. The distinguishing characteristic of the trespass-offering proper was restitution. The offences for which it was offered were such as admitted of restitution, and the distinction from the sin-offering cannot be better expressed than in the words of Prof. Cave: "The sin and trespass-offerings were both sacrifices for sins; but in the former the leading idea was that of atonement, the expiation of sin by a substituted life; in the latter the leading feature was that of satisfaction, the wiping out of sin by the payment of a recompense." It is well worthy of note that in the trespass-offering for sins against God, the ritual prescribed was sacrifice first, restitution following; while in those against man the order was reversed: restitution first, followed by sacrifice on the altar. The appropriateness of the difference will be readily seen. In the former case, where the sin consisted in withholding from God that which was His due, it was not really God that lost anything, it was the sinner. Giving to God is not regarded as a debt which a man must pay, but rather as a privilege which he may enjoy; and, accordingly, before a man can enjoy the privilege of which he has foolishly deprived himself, he must come and offer his sacrifice upon the altar. But when the sinner has been withholding from his fellow-man that which is his due, the delinquency is regarded in the light of a debt, and he is not allowed to go to the altar of God until he has paid his debt, and not only discharged the principal in full, but added one-fifth part thereto. (*J. M. Gibson, D.D.*) *This is the law*:—We find this text in many places (see chaps. vi. 25; vii. 1, 11, 37). What we want is just this—definiteness. There must be a line of certainty somewhere, or the universe could not be kept together. There may be ten thousand contributory lines, contingent or incidental lines, but there must be running right through the heart of things a law of definiteness and certitude; otherwise coherence is impossible, and permanence is of the nature of a dissolving cloud. We want to get upon that line. Quest in search of that line is orthodoxy. To seek after truth, what is this but to love wisdom and to pant for God? What have you? You have great information.

What is the value of information? Nothing, beyond that which is merely momentary and tentative. It is the last thing to be known or that is known. But then in two hours we shall know something more. Information is never final. Hence men say, "To the best of my knowledge." What a confession is in these simple words if we submit them to their last analysis! "To the best of my judgment," "So far as I know," "According to the best advice I can get"; what is all this but sand? You could not build a house upon such sand. It would never do for information to be final or complete or authoritative; it is by this kind of uncertainty that we are kept modest, it is by this kind of incertitude we are often inspired, and it is because intellectual life is a continual tumult that we grow athletically, that the brain becomes stronger. What we want to come upon is the line of law which itself is a line of progress, a line of change into ever-increasing largeness, but never a change of quality or of moral purpose. If we want to know the law we can find it. If you want to be right you can be right. "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Can we go to the law? We can do better. It is the business of the gospel minister to say how. We can not only go to the law, we can go to the Lawgiver, we can go to the living Jesus Christ. We can see Him face to face, or, better still, using the word "face" in its true interpretation, we can see Him soul to soul. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) The priest shall have to himself the skin of the burnt-offering.—*The skin legislated for* :—Why God should think of so small and base a thing as the skin, some may ask a reason; and see you the reason and the good of it. 1. It notably confirmeth our faith in His providence, that He will never forget us and leave us destitute of things needful and good for us, seeing we are much better than the skin of a brute beast, whereof yet He hath care and thought. 2. It showed that sweet and comfortable care that the Lord then had, and still hath, of the ministry, that it should be maintained, and not defrauded of the least thing allotted to it, which still He sheweth in all other particulars, urging still that they be given to the priests according to His will. 3. This care of the Lord for the beast's skin, to appoint it to one that should have it, well taught that people then, and still teacheth us ever to be careful to prevent strife, and to take away all questions and controversies as much as we may, that every one knowing what is his may therein rest, and peace ensue. The more God hath given you, the more must be your pain this way, in your good health and perfect memory. (*Bp. Babington.*)

Vers. 11–18. **The law of the sacrifice of peace-offerings.**—*The peace-offering* :—**I. CHARACTERISTICS.** 1. The animal offered might be a male or a female—differing in this from the burnt-offering. 2. It was not to be wholly consumed as the burnt offerings. 3. If for a thanksgiving offering, unleavened cakes, mingled with oil, as well as leavened, might be offered. 4. If for a vow or a voluntary offering, the parts to be eaten must be eaten on the same or the following day. 5. No ceremonially-unclean person could eat of the peace-offering. **II. SIGNIFICANCE.** 1. The peace-offering, as the name implies, presents to us our Lord Jesus as our peace (*Eph. ii. 14*). 2. This is the key to this symbolic offering, by which may be unlocked, with certainty, some, at least, of its rich treasures. (1) The parts consumed—representing the most excellent parts, the inward parts, the hidden energies—were offered on the altar unto God the Father—in which He was "well pleased." (2) The other parts eaten by the priests representing the true believer feeding on Christ as his Peace, having laid his hand of faith on Him; the sprinkled blood being the ground of peace. (3) The wave-breast representing the love of Christ, and the heave-shoulder His all-power, give the two leading elements in Christ on which the believer feeds with joyous delight. (4) The unleavened cakes, representing the new nature of the believer, being mingled with oil, the oil representing the Holy Spirit, show the necessity for even the regenerated to be assisted by the power of the Spirit for profitable communion with God in Christ, and to enter into the fulness of the love and power of Christ. (5) Leavened bread, signifying evil, was to be offered as well as unleavened, to signify that our sinful nature should be recognised in our "sacrifice of thanksgiving"—not for condemnation, but for joy that it is judged. The sin in us should not hinder our communion with God in Christ, if we have no sin upon us. (6) The ceremonially-unclean could not eat of the wave-breast or heave-shoulder, to signify that sin unconfessed, and therefore unpardoned, is an insurmountable hindrance to fellowship with God in Christ. (*D. C. Hughes, M.A.*) *The peace-offering* :—**I. THE PEACE-OFFERING IS A SACRIFICE OF THANKSGIVING.** Three forms of it are specified—1. The offering

of thanksgiving, *i.e.*, for some special blessing. 2. The vow, the fulfilment of a promise to God. 3. The voluntary offering, made from a principle of gratitude, when, with no special occasion, the worshipper called upon his soul and all within him to praise and bless God's holy name. It was a peace-offering, a national thanksgiving, which Solomon made at the dedication of the Temple. It is this sacrifice which is so frequently referred to in the Psalms. In connection with the celebration of the Passover there were two peace-offerings. The former of these is continued in the Lord's Supper, which is a feast of thanksgiving for God's greatest gift to men. We should thank God at the sacramental table for all special exhibitions of the Divine goodness. II. THE PEACE-OFFERING IS A SACRIFICE OF FELLOWSHIP. This, taken with thanksgiving, is its characteristic idea. The feature peculiar to it was the sacrificial meal; the partaking of that which was offered by the worshipper. The priests shared in what was offered in the meat and sin-offerings. The worshipper also partook of the peace-offering. The sacrifice was an act of holy communion. Also a social meal. III. THE BASIS OF COMMUNION IN THE PEACE-OFFERING IS SACRIFICE; AND IN THE SACRIFICE, THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD. The shedding of the blood in this particular sacrifice does not represent, as in the sin-offering, the act of atoning for sin. The bleeding Christ as our Peace-offering is not our sin-bearer. But His blood in this offering also declares that an atonement has been made, and that the sole ground of fellowship with God is the reconciling blood of the Lamb (Eph. ii. 13, 14). IV. THE PEACE-OFFERING REQUIRES HOLINESS IN THE WORSHIPPER. This fact is expressed in the provision that unleavened bread should be offered as a part of the sacrifice. Yeast, or leaven, was a symbol of corruption. The principle of corruption must be carefully excluded, if our offering is to find acceptance. Is there old leaven of sin in your life? V. IN THE PEACE-OFFERING THE SINFULNESS OF A NATURE PARTIALLY SANCTIFIED IS CONFESED. The curse of sin is no more *on* us, but it is *in* us. (*G. R. Leavitt.*) *Thanksgiving and thanksgiving*:—It is most interesting to find, here among the sober directions that Moses was commissioned to deliver to the Israelites, one which assumes a constant recognition of God's love and bounty. The peace-offering seems to have for its definite end the earnest inculcation of a perpetual exercise of devotion, without any special occasion, as well as with some which are carefully mentioned. Perhaps the best account of the whole ordinance is given in the familiar words of Kurtz: "A state of peace and of friendship with God was the basis and the essential of the presentation of the peace-offering; and the design of the presentation, from which its name was derived, was the realisation and establishment, the verification and enjoyment, of the existing relation of peace, friendship, fellowship, and blessedness." It may be well for us just to pick out the particulars of this form of description. I. In the peace-offering there was inculcated A SPIRIT OF TRANQUIL TRUST. When one made the sacrifice, it signified that he was in the state of reconciliation with God. The law had lost its curse; sin was in process of being subdued; the soul of the glad believer simply rested upon the promises of redemption, and waited for its salvation. Among the severe passes of the Scottish highlands, it is memorable always to mention Glencoe; for no one who has ever climbed the fatiguing steeps can forget that, after the weary way had led him up and on, and beneath the shadow of the grotesque Ben Arthur, past many a disappointing elevation which he thought surely would be the last, he finally reached that mossy stone, by the winding wayside, on which are written the welcome words, "Here rest, and be thankful!" There, sitting down in peace, one sees the rare prospect of beautiful hill and vale, rock and loch kindling and shadowing each other, far away towards the blue horizon; and just beside him, at the turn of the road, is also the long path by which he came. Such spots of experience there are on the mountains of life, when the forgiven sinner, now a child, pauses to say to himself, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." In the original verse this reads "resting-places." II. In the peace-offering there was inculcated also A SPIRIT OF HEARTFELT GRATITUDE. This service is called "the sacrifice of thanksgiving" (Psa. cxvi. 17). How many mercies have been given us! How many perils have been averted! How many fears have been allayed! How many friendly communions have been granted! How many anticipations have been kindled! How many hopes have been gratified! *Per contra*, just a serious thought might likewise be bestowed upon the other side of the ledger. Said old Christmas Evans, in an unusually lengthened period of reminiscence, "Thy love has been as a shower; the returns, alas! only a dewdrop now and then, and even that dewdrop stained with sin!"

At this point the suggestion which this ceremonial makes concerning permanency of devout acknowledgment is welcome. "Thanksgiving is good," said the venerable Philip Henry to his children, "but thanksgiving is better." We ought not to seek to exhaust our gratitude upon any single day's exercise. It is better to live our thanks through all our lifetime. A happy, grateful spirit is the Christian's best offering to God, morning, noon, and night. III. In the peace-offering there was likewise inculcated a SPIRIT OF FAITHFUL CONSECRATION. There are always two sides to any covenant. When we plead God's promises, we certainly have need to remember our own. God expects a Christian who has been favoured to be unforgetful. Alexander Severus is reported to have made an edict that no one should salute the emperor on the street who knew himself to be a thief. And it must be unbecoming for any one to praise or pray who remembers that his life contains the record of some vow made once but still unkept. Hence it sometimes happens that one part of our history will give help to another, for it quickens the zeal of our love to call to remembrance a day in which God's love drew forth our engagement. It is related of the famous Thomas Erskine, before he was a Christian man, that once when wandering in a lonely glen among the mountains of his own land, he came across a shepherd pasturing his flock. "Do you know the Father?" asked the plain man, with unmistakable gentleness of devotion. The proud scholar vouchsafed no reply, but the arrow struck. He was never easy again till he found peace with pardon of his sins. He would have been glad to thank his modest unknown benefactor. So he went forth along the same path for many a useless day. Years afterwards, he saw him almost in the identical spot. "I know the Father now," he said, with sweet, grave greeting. IV. In the peace-offering there was inculcated a SPIRIT OF LIVELY JOY. We find this in the very unusual ceremony of waving a portion of the sacrifice in the air. There is no explanation given of this; what could it have meant but the holding up of one's whole heart in the offering in the full sight of God? It makes us think of the significant gesture of courtesy the world over, the swing of one's hand when his wish is keen and his happy heart longs still to send it aloft, while the distance is too far for speech. A Christian, waving the offering of his gratitude before God, ought to be the happiest being on all the earth. V. In the peace-offering there was inculcated a SPIRIT OF CONFIDENT SUPPLICATION. Near a hundred years after this, it is recorded (Judg. xxi. 4) that the men of Israel, "bemoaning the desolation of Benjamin," offered "burnt-offerings and peace-offerings" upon the same altar. That is to say, they mingled their prayers with gifts of appropriate penitence. So again, after a disastrously lost battle (Judg. xx. 26). And even down in David's time, almost five hundred years later, the same conjunction of the two sacrifices is to be observed. He stayed the plague by his penitence in a burnt-offering, and he received relief in answer to his prayer in a peace-offering (2 Sam. xxiv. 25). Nothing can be more attractive than this artless trust in the Divine mercy. "To give thanks for grace already received is a refined way of begging for more." VI. Finally, in the peace-offering there was inculcated a SPIRIT OF AFFECTIONATE SOLICITUDE. (C. S. Robinson, D.D.) *Thank-offerings, vows, and freewill-offerings*:—It is easy to connect the special characteristics of these several varieties of the peace-offering with the great Antitype. So may we use Him as our Thank-offering; for what more fitting as an expression of gratitude and love to God for mercies received than renewed and special fellowship with Him through feeding upon Christ as the slain Lamb? So also we may thus use Christ in our vows; as when, supplicating mercy, we promise and engage that if our prayer be heard we will renewedly consecrate our service to the Lord, as in the meal-offering, and anew enter into life-giving fellowship with Him through feeding by faith on the flesh of the Lord. And it is beautifully hinted in the permission of the use of leaven in this feast of the peace-offering, that while the work of the believer, as presented to God in grateful acknowledgment of His mercies, is ever affected with the taint of his native corruption, so that it cannot come upon the altar where satisfaction is made for sin, yet God is graciously pleased, for the sake of the great Sacrifice, to accept such imperfect service offered to Him, and make it in turn a blessing to us, as we offer it in His presence, rejoicing in the work of our hands before Him. But there was one condition without which the Israelite could not have communion with God in the peace-offering. He must be clean; even as the flesh of the peace-offering must be clean also. There must be in him nothing which should interrupt covenant fellowship with God; as nothing in the type which should make it an unfit symbol of the Antitype. (S. H. Kellogg, D.D.)

Why the law of the peace-offering is given last of all:—It is interesting to observe that, although the peace-offering itself stands third in order, yet “the law” thereof is given us last of all. This circumstance is not without its import. There is none of the offerings in which the communion of the worshipper is so fully unfolded as in the peace-offering. In the burnt-offering it is Christ offering Himself to God. In the meat-offering we have Christ’s perfect humanity. Then, passing on to the sin-offering, we learn that sin, in its root, is fully met. In the trespass-offering there is a full answer to the actual sins in the life. But in none is the doctrine of the communion and worship unfolded. The latter belongs to “the peace-offering”; and hence, I believe, the position which the law of that offering occupies. It comes in at the close of all, thereby teaching us that, when it becomes a question of the soul’s feeding upon Christ, it must be a full Christ, looked at in every possible phase of His life, His character, His Person, His work, His offices. And, furthermore, that, when we shall have done for ever with sin and sins, we shall delight in Christ, and feed upon Him throughout the everlasting ages. It would, I believe, be a serious defect in our study of the offerings were we to pass over a circumstance so worthy of notice as the above. If “the law of the peace-offering” were given in the order in which the offering itself occurs, it would come in immediately after the law of the meat-offering; but, instead of that, “the law of the sin-offering,” and “the law of the trespass-offering” are given, and then “the law of the peace-offering” closes the entire. (C. H. Mackintosh.) “*Shall be eaten the same day that it is offered*”:—The priest that sprinkled the blood was to eat the pieces of this peace-offering the same day that it was offered. Some say this rule prevented covetousness arising in the priests; no one had it in his power to hoard up. Others say this rule was fitted to promote brotherly love; for he must call together his friends, in order to have it all finished. But these uses are only incidental. The true uses lie much nearer the surface. Israel might hereby be taught to offer thanksgiving while the benefit was still fresh and recent. Besides this, and most specially, the offerer who saw the priest cut it in pieces and feast thereon, knew thereby that God had accepted his gift, and returned rejoicing to his dwelling, like David and his people, when their peace-offerings were ended, at the bringing up of the ark (2 Sam. vi. 17–19). The Lord took special notice of this free, spontaneous thank-offering, inasmuch as He commanded it to be immediately eaten, thus speedily assuring the worshipper of peace and acceptance. The love of our God is too full to be restrained from us one moment longer than is needful for the manifestation of His holiness. (A. A. Bonar.)

Vers. 19–21. That soul shall be cut off.—*Impurity forbidden:*—The gospel is a holy feast. It cannot be shared in by those who continue in their impurities. He that would enjoy it must be careful to depart from iniquity. Only “*the meek shall eat and be satisfied*”; that is, such as humbly surrender themselves to God’s requirements, and are really determined to forsake all known sin. There is a morality in religion, as well as faith and ecstasy. Grace does not make void the law. And faith without works is a dead and useless faith. Though we are redeemed by blood and justified gratuitously by believing in Christ, yet that redemption obligates us just as much, and still more, to a life of virtue and moral uprightness than the law itself. “We are not under law,” as those are under it for whom Christ’s mediation does not avail; but still we “are under law to Christ,” and bound through Him to a practical holiness, the pattern of which He has given in His own person and life. If His blood has purged us, it is that we might “serve the living God.” If “we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus,” it is “unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” A pure life must needs go along with a good hope. “Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.” “A good tree cannot produce evil fruit.” And for a man to believe himself an accepted guest at the gospel feast while living in wilful, deliberate, and known sin, is a miserable antinomian delusion. The plain gospel truth upon this subject is, that, although we cannot be saved by our works alone, we certainly dare not hope to be saved without them, or without being heartily and effectually made up to do our best. Wherever grace is effective, a well-ordered morality must necessarily follow. (J. A. Seiss, D D.)

Vers. 29–34. Peace-offerings.—*The believer’s peace and portion:*—I. TO HAVE GOD IS TO HAVE PEACE: for He is the God of peace; especially as revealed and

given us in Christ. But what is given may be enjoyed, as what is offered may be received. Then let the gift be accepted, and the peace you desire will "keep your heart and mind," and this in all circumstances. The winds of adversity may smite you, and the waters of affliction overwhelm you; but as God is greater than these, He keeps in the perfectness of peace the minds that are stayed upon Him. II. Such peace is FOUND IN CHRIST ALONE; not in anything done by Him, or given by Him, but in His personal indwelling. "He is our peace." The knowledge of Him will illuminate, and the faith of Him will impart security; but you must have Himself to have the portion that will satisfy, and the peace you need. III. But not only is Christ our peace, but from being the ATONER, OUR PEACE-OFFERING, He gives Himself to God an offering and a sweet-smelling savour, and then to us who trust in Him for deliverance and satisfaction. The ancient Jewish sacrifice of the peace-offering illustrates this—1. The material of which it consisted was either a bullock, heifer, lamb, or goat; but in all cases it was to be "without blemish." God is entitled to the best, and will receive nothing less. Yet how often is less than what He asks offered Him! That they who so act by Him should have few answers to their prayers, and little satisfaction in their religion, can be wondered at by no one. 2. Peace-offerings were offered by persons who, having obtained forgiveness of sins, and given themselves to God, were at peace with Him. Friendship with God was the principal idea represented therein. 3. Only a part of the peace-offering was given to God; but that was the best, the part to which He was entitled, and which He claimed. And it was accepted, as was shown by its consumption by fire. Offer Him your best, and, though in itself small and poor, He will receive it, and make liberal acknowledgment of His approval of it. 4. The Israelite was not at liberty to lay the fat of his offering at random, any way, or anywhere, on the altar. He had to lay it "upon the sacrifice that was upon the wood on the altar fire." But that sacrifice was the lamb of the daily offering, which typified atonement in its fulness. There, God's portion of the peace-offering was laid, and accepted according to the value of that on which it was offered. 5. Apart from Christ nothing is acceptable to Him. What you bring to Him may be your best, that which He asks for, and what is in itself valuable; but unless offered on the ground of atonement it is not received by Him. 6. But that is the ground within every one's reach, and on which everything that is offered to God may be presented. There is no one by whom the name of Jesus may not be used as a plea, and His sacrifice urged as a reason for acceptance. IV. The peace-offering expressed the thought of COMMUNION AND SATISFACTION. It supplied God with a portion, and man also. It furnished a table at which both met, and where they had fellowship with one another. God fed on the fat, and man on the shoulder and breast (ver. 31); and both were satisfied. 1. But we have Christ here; and we know what the Father ever found in Him; with what pleasure He ever regarded Him, in His righteousness of walk, perfection of obedience, and beauty of character. God was supremely pleased with all that Jesus was and did, as the representative of Himself to men, and the ideal man to the world, the indicator of holiness and the honourer of the law. Christ was, and is still, His well-beloved and His joy. 2. But not God alone fed on the peace-offering, man did that also; he ate of the breast and the shoulder. In the antitype these typified love and strength. These, believer, are your portion in Christ. You have His heart of love and His shoulder of might—His unchanging affection and His all-sustaining power. Enfolded in His embrace and enthroned on His shoulder of strength, you occupy a position where evil cannot harm you, nor want remain unmet. V. No Israelite who was ceremonially UNCLEAN was permitted to partake of the peace-offering, or share with God in the provision it supplied. And without holiness no man is now allowed to see God. But provision is made both for man's expiation and for his sanctifying from all impurity. The Cross that separates from the guilt of sin also separates from its defilement. Christ is thus Sanctifier as well as Justifier. He "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people" (Tit. ii. 14). Thus beautified with His salvation, you will find a place in His banqueting-house of love, a guest at the Lord's table, and satisfied with the food of which you partake (John vi. 57, 58, 35). Are you satisfied with Christ? Does He appease all your yearnings, fulfil your every desire, give you rest, and prove your peace? "My beloved is mine, and I am His" (Song of Sol. ii. 16). His resources are inexhaustible, His communications are continuous, and His glory is Divine. (*James Fleming, D.D.*) *The peace-offerings*:—In regard to the peace-offerings, the waving was peculiarly connected with the breast, which

is thence called the wave-breast; and the heaving with the shoulder, for this reason called the heave-shoulder. When those parts were thus presented to God and set apart to the priesthood, the rest of the flesh was given up to the offerer to be partaken of by himself and those he might call to share and rejoice with him. Among these he was instructed to invite, beside his own friends, the Levite, the widow, and the fatherless. This participation by the offerer and his friends, this family feast upon the sacrifice, may be regarded as the most distinctive characteristic of the peace-offerings. It denoted that the offerer was admitted to a state of near fellowship and enjoyment with God, shared part and part with Jehovah and His priests, had a standing in His house, and a seat at His table. It was therefore the symbol of established friendship with God, and near communion with Him in the blessings of His kingdom; and was associated in the minds of the worshippers with feelings of peculiar joy and gladness—but these always of a sacred character. And in the way by which the worshipper attained to a fitness for enjoying these privileges—viz., through the life-blood of atonement—how impressive a testimony was borne to the necessity of seeking the road to all dignity and blessing in the kingdom of God through faith in a crucified Redeemer. (*P. Fairbairn, D.D.*)

No offering by proxy:—The worshipper could not do the work by proxy. The man had to go for himself, and present the sacrifice himself, and lay his hand upon its head, and confess, and eat, all for himself. There can be no transfer of religious obligations—no substitution in the performance of religious duties. Of all things, piety is one of the most intensely personal. It is the intercourse of the individual soul with its Maker; just as much as if there were no other beings in existence. As each must eat, and die, and be judged for him or herself, so each must repent, and believe, and be religious for him or herself. I do not depreciate the importance of social relations, compacts and organisations. I believe that religion is very greatly dependent upon them. Had we never been placed in a Christian land, or been related to Christian parents and friends, or been brought into contact with the Christian Church, we never could have become Christians. But when it comes to the real activities and experiences of piety, they relate as directly to ourselves as individuals as if we alone existed. It is a great thing to have pious friends. The prayers of a godly mother are like soft silken cords around the heart of her son, which draw upon and check him in his wildest wanderings and his maddest passion. The rude sailor on the deck, or the hardened culprit in his cell, is melted and subdued at the mere remembrance of a sainted mother. But, though that mother be as good as the Virgin Mother of our Lord—though she nightly bathe her pillow with tears of supplication for her boy—it shall avail nothing to the salvation of her erring child, unless he himself shall move to turn from his follies, to bend in penitence, and to submit himself to God. True religion demands one's personal and individual action—the putting forth of one's own hand. No man or angel can do it for us. Preachers and pious friends may prompt, direct, encourage, and pray for us, but that is all. They can do nothing more. We must individually and for ourselves believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, or be lost. There is no other alternative. A very expressive gesture was required of the Jew to signify all this. He had to put his hand upon the head of his sacrifice when he presented it. He thereby acknowledged his sin, and expressed his personal dependence upon that sacrifice. The Hebrew word is still more suggestive. "He shall lean his hand upon the head of the offering." It is the same word used by the Psalmist, where he says, "Thy wrath leaneth hard upon me." Sin is a burden. It is ready to crush him upon whom it is. And with this burden the sinner is to lean upon his sacrifice for ease. He could not lean with another man's hand; he must use "his own hand." The ceremonial worshipper used the outward hand; we are to use the hand of the soul, which is faith. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*)

Vers. 37, 38. **This is the law . . . to offer their oblations.**—*The gospel of the sacrifices*:—I. THERE WAS A DIVINE INSTITUTION AND COMMAND OF GOD, FOR THE OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES WHICH WERE UNDER THE LAW. 1. An offering in general is anything presented to the Lord to become peculiarly His, and to be typical of Christ and gospel mysteries. 2. The legal offerings were set apart for God, with respect to Christ and His great sacrifice and offering up of Himself unto God for us. 3. Some have distinguished them into three sorts. (1) Such as were offered at the brazen altar, or the altar of burnt-offering, which represented the death and sufferings of Jesus Christ. (2) Such as were offered in the sanctuary, more near to the Holy of Holies, viz., the shewbread and the incense at the altar of incense;

which had respect to His intercession for us at the throne of grace, in the virtue and by the merit of that sacrifice which He before had shed and offered up. (3) Such as were offered in the Holy of Holies; which represented the full attainment of the ends of both the former, viz., our full access unto and communion with God through the influence both of the death and oblation as likewise of the prayers and intercession of Christ for us. 4. The sacrifices that were offered at the brazen altar are commonly distributed into two sorts—sacrifices of expiation, and sacrifices of thanksgiving. It is the former sort whereof the text speaks. (1) These propitiatory sacrifices were offerings most holy to the Lord; for atonement, or for appeasing of His wrath; by the destruction of the sacrifice; to shadow forth the true atonement and expiation of sin, by the death of Jesus, and our reconciliation to and communion with God through Him. (2) For further rules of illustration, take these propositions—(a) The institution of sacrifices was presently after the sin and fall of man; but the renewed institution and further direction and regulation of them was by Moses unto Israel. (b) In this renewed institution and regulation of their offerings and sacrifices, there were sundry adjuncts and ceremonies, some whereof were required and some severely forbidden to be added to them, all which were mystical and significant. i. Adjuncts required. Sacrifices to be offered only at this one altar. Salt. Music. Incense. Many ceremonious actions. ii. Adjuncts forbidden. In general, any conformity or compliance with the pagans in their rites and ceremonies. In particular, leaven and honey. (c) The occasions upon which they were to be offered. i. When under guilt of sin. ii. For the obtaining of any needful mercy. iii. To testify their joy and thankfulness for mercies received. iv. In the instituted seasons of them. II. THE SACRIFICES OF PROPITIATION UNDER THE LAW, may be referred to these six kinds or sorts—burnt-offering, meat-offering, peace-offering, sin-offering, trespass-offering, and offering of consecrations. 1. There were some things in which these all agreed. (1) They were all offered at the brazen altar. (2) They were all holy of holinesses. (3) They were all offerings made by fire. (4) They were all propitiatory. 2. The difference consisted—(1) Partly in the different matter of them. An ox or a sheep in some; flowers and wine in others. (2) Partly in the particular ends and designs and occasions of them. (3) Principally in the different ceremonies accompanying them. Lessons: 1. Keep close to the rule of Divine institution in matters of worship. 2. See the worth and value of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and the necessity of it, for the justification and salvation of lost sinners. (*S. Mather.*)

CHAPTER VIII.

VERS. 2-30. *Sanctified Aaron . . . and his sons.*—*Aaron and his consecration:*—The chapter before us gives a description of the ceremonies by which the priests were consecrated and formally inducted into their high office. These ceremonies were, for the most part, the same for Aaron and his sons; but it is the case of the high priest more particularly that I propose to present now. The case of the common priests is reserved for another occasion. I. Fixing attention, then, upon Aaron, as about to be set apart for the high priesthood, the first thing I notice is THE PUBLICITY WITH WHICH THE CONSECRATION WAS PERFORMED. The whole congregation of Israel had to be gathered together to witness the solemn transaction. The creation of so high an officer for the whole people required to be done in open daylight and in the view of all concerned. And the scene presented an imposing spectacle. But, through this scene in the Hebrew camp, I ascend at once to the contemplation of a more glorious spectacle. There rises up before me, in awful grandeur, the mount of Almighty Holiness. Around it, in serried orders, lie the principedoms and principalities of heaven. Myriads of holy ones, who looked on when the world was made, stand in compact throngs to watch in solemn silence the development of that new thought which has been thrown into their celestial contemplations. The four-and-twenty elders, with their crowns of gold glittering in the sublime effulgence of the great white throne, wait in impressive seriousness: when out upon the glassy sea, spanned by emerald bows, and radiant in jewelry of God-head, steps the blessed Son, saying, "Lo! I come to do Thy will, O God!" "I will redeem them from death: I will ransom them from the power of the grave!"

and the Father from His everlasting seat lifts up His hand in solemn oath and says, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek!" II. The first thing to be done after the appearance of Aaron before the congregation as the designated priest, was to WASH HIM WITH WATER. It was meant to impress the idea of cleanness in him who was to act as an attorney between man and his Maker. And Aaron in his outward purification shows us our great High Priest in the sublime purity which He brought to His mediation work. Jesus "was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." It was partly in token of this pureness and separation that John, as another Moses, baptized Him in Jordan vale. He needed no cleansing. He always was pure. But, to indicate this purity, and to enter upon His priesthood in the regular way, He consented to be washed, as was Aaron. His baptism was part of His priestly installation. III. The next thing done for Aaron's consecration was THE PUTTING OF THE SACRED VESTMENTS UPON HIM. The priest was to be endowed with grace and glory as well as purity. He had to be clothed in righteousness, and girt for active obedience. He needed covering for those shoulders, which were to bear the people's guilt, and for that brow, which was to be lifted up in confession. A rich, curious, graceful, and imposing suit was therefore provided for him—a suit which received its pattern from God, and was made according to specific Divine directions. A glorious High Priest is Jesus. Fold upon fold of glory and beauty encompass Him. With round upon round of heavenly excellency and celestial praise is He girded. Purity, and holiness, and power, and grace, and majesty, and ten thousand indescribable attractions, cluster upon Him, and surround Him with flames of perfection and light, which only the most costly jewelry can typify, which angels bend to contemplate, and which archangels cannot find words competent to express. IV. The next thing in this impressive service was THE HOLY CHRISM, OR THE ANOINTING WITH OIL. This was not common oil, but the sacred, fragrant, and costly compound used only in solemn consecrations. It was "precious ointment on the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, and went down to the skirts of his garments," enveloping him in aroma as grateful to the smell as his garments were to the eye. It was the symbol of Divine gifts and unction. It pointed to that solemn chrism or *christing* of Jesus, by the pouring out upon Him of the Holy Spirit and energy of God "without measure." V. BUT STILL, CHRIST WAS NOT YET "MADE PERFECT." Moses had yet to mark and sprinkle Aaron with the blood of sacrifice; and, as the Captain of our salvation, Christ had to be "made perfect through sufferings." He needed to have upon Him the marks of blood. And as He was both the sacrifice and the priest, He had to give Himself to death before He could enter the Holy Place as our availing intercessor. We read that "Moses took of the blood, and put it upon the tip of Aaron's right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot. And he took of the anointing oil, and of the blood upon the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron and upon his garments." It was the picture of "the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God," marking our great High Priest with the final touches of His installation as the Saviour of the world. Thus "being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *The spiritual signification of Aaron's anointing* :—

1. Some will have it to signify the power of consecration, which from the high priest was diffused upon others—as the oil ran down from the head to the inferior parts.
2. Some refer it to the graces of God's Spirit upon ministers, whereby their ministration is made acceptable unto God.
3. Some that this abundance of oil poured upon the high priest's head would have thereby expressed that he should excel others in the fragrant smell of good works.
4. But it is better referred to Christ, in whom there was a perfection of gifts, who is said to be anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows; and the Evangelist saith, "God giveth Him not the Spirit by measure." So also Rupertus understandeth it for the fulness of grace in Christ, whereof all have received, as again the Evangelist saith, "Of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace."
5. Hesychius taketh this unction also for the incarnation of Christ, who was anointed in His blessed flesh with the Spirit of grace. He anointeth, as He is God, in respect of His Divine nature, and is anointed in His humanity. God the Father anointed Him, as it is said in the Psalms, "God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee"; and the Holy Spirit anointed Him, as the Prophet saith, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; therefore He hath anointed Me." (*A. Willet, D.D.*) *The consecration of Aaron's sons* :—

I. These sons of Aaron, as well as Aaron himself, had been PREVIOUSLY AND DIVINELY CALLED TO BE PRIESTS. They had not been elected by men, but designated of God. Even

so our calling and election to be priests of God and of Christ has come not from any workings of nature, but from the supernatural interposition of Divine grace. God, by His word and Spirit, has come forth, and nominated every one of us to the high service of ministering at His altar. He has sent forth His ministers and commissioned them to set apart all men whom they can reach, to be His priests. II. Aaron and his sons OBEDIENTLY ASSENTED TO THEIR DIVINE APPOINTMENT. Would to God that I could say as much for all who are called to be priests under the new and better covenant! But it cannot be said. Though God calls, many refuse. They prefer to be priests of sin and self to being priests of God and of Christ. They choose rather to minister for iniquity and Satan than minister at the pure altar of Him who made them. III. Aaron and his sons were CONSECRATED ACCORDING TO SPECIFIC DIVINE DIRECTIONS. As Moses proceeded to attend to it, he said, "This is the thing which the Lord commanded to be done." No wisdom or ingenuity of man can set apart priests for God. No rites that we can devise, no observances which this world's sages may invent, can ever induct a man into Christian offices. Not even Moses had any right to proceed a single step, or to do one thing, except as God directed him. And everything which God commanded had to be done. Nor is it different now. We can only be set apart as priests of God and of Christ by the ceremonies which God Himself, by His Son, has prescribed. No rites of human make, no decrees of councils, or commands of earthly sovereigns, in Church or State; no liturgies; no manual impositions; no services, however solemn or dignified; nothing can avail one feather's weight toward making any one a priest of God. His own clear and specific appointments alone can do this. It must be done by means of God's own un mutilated prescriptions, or it cannot be done at all. IV. The consecration of Aaron and his sons was a PUBLIC AND OPEN TRANSACTION. The command of God was, "Gather thou all the congregation together"; and the history says, "the assembly was gathered together unto the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation," around the spot where the solemn deed was done. We cannot secretly be inducted into the holy priesthood to which the gospel calls us. If there is any such a thing as secret discipleship, it is a very imperfect discipleship. Christ requires of us to confess Him before men. He demands of us an open and unreserved following of Him. He exacts submission to all His holy ordinances, some of which are essentially public. And if we are not willing to be openly known as God's consecrated priests, I doubt whether our secret religion is of a sort that will avail in the Great Day. We come now to consider the particulars of the consecration itself. 1. "And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water." This was the first item in the service. And what does it typify, but that "washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour"? 2. "And Moses brought Aaron's sons, and put coats upon them, and girded them with girdles, and put bonnets upon them." This was the second item in the service. After their cleansing they had to be clothed with ornaments "for glory and for beauty." We must be pure, and we must be holy. Our native deformities must all be covered. We must "put on the Lord Jesus Christ," and be arrayed in His loveliness. His own glorious attainments are to be reflected in ours. 3. A third item in this consecration service, was the leaning of hands upon the head of the sin-offering. Everywhere, even in our holiest moods and most sacred doings, there still flashes out the stern and humiliating accusation—"O man, thou art a sinner! All thy goodness is but abomination apart from Christ!" There must, therefore, be a habitual recurrence of our minds to this fact. Our hand must be ever kept on the brow of the atoning Lamb. 4. "And Moses put of the blood upon the tip of their right ear, and upon the thumbs of their right hands, and upon the great toes of their right feet." The whole person is visibly dedicated to the Lord. Every faculty and power is consecrated with the blood of the Lamb. 5. "And Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which was upon the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons' garments with him." Even after their setting apart to be priests, they needed to be yet further sanctified as priests. Not only themselves, but their very garments also, were marked as holy. The sacred oil was emblematic of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit. And so the Holy Ghost, in conjunction with the blood of the Lamb, sanctifies and endows us for holy services. Sprinkled with these sacred elements—touched with moral unction and constrained by the dying love of Jesus, we become equipped for duty, and qualified "to show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light." 6. Still another item in the consecration of God's ancient priests was that they had

to eat the boiled flesh of the offered lamb with unleavened bread, at the door of the Tabernacle. This boiled lamb of course typifies the Saviour as offered for our sins. It calls to mind the great sufferings which He endured as our Substitute and Sacrifice of consecration. And now that He is thus made an offering for our sanctification, it appertains to us to put forth our hands, and eat of that offering, as the life and feast of our souls. He is the bread of life, and upon that bread we must feed to be God's priests. 7. Aaron and his sons, having attended to these several particulars, were further required to "abide at the door of the Tabernacle day and night seven days," before they could enter fully upon the high offices to which they had been consecrated. The number seven is very often used in the Scriptures as the type of perfection and completeness. The consecration period was a complete period—a full measure of time. It was not only the fact of completeness, but a duration through which this fact was brought out. We are not only to be completely consecrated to a complete spiritual priesthood, but it is to take a complete period of time in which this completeness is to be effected. We must yet wait the revolution of a complete period before we can come into the Holy of Holies. That complete period can be nothing short of our entire earthly life. It is necessary to complete our glorious installation as priests of God and of Christ. And it will soon be over. It is only "seven days"—the shortest of all the complete periods of human reckoning. Before we think of it, it will have passed. For some of us, much of it has already gone. (*Ibid.*) *The calling of the priests*:—I. THE PRIESTLY CALLING. 1. Intimate access with God. 2. Fullest knowledge of God. 3. Holy service for God. II. A CALLING OF HIGHEST HAPPINESS AND PRIVILEGE. III. A CALLING HARMONIOUS WITH A CHRISTIAN'S SACRED INSTINCTS AND ENERGIES. IV. A CALLING INTO A WONDROUS LIFE. (*W. H. Jellie.*) *Priests versus priestism*:—I. PRIESTS MINISTERED IN ISRAEL WITH THE HIGH SANCTION OF GOD. He—1. Created the office, and defined its solemn functions, which were of the loftiest character. 2. Invested the person of the priest with splendour, majesty, and beauty, to command admiration and awe. 3. Determined the mediatorial intervention of the priest between man and God; set one man in this august and solemn supremacy among his fellows. 4. Refused any other than the priest to come direct to His altar and stand in His most holy presence. II. THE PRIESTHOOD WAS A PROVISIONAL ARRANGEMENT ANTICIPATORY OF CHRIST'S GLORIOUS OFFICES. 1. In the personal excellence and piety of individual priests, the faultless being always chosen, Christ's perfect humanity was foreshadowed. 2. In the splendid attire with which the priests were adorned, Christ's majestic attributes and Divine qualities were represented. 3. In the imposing ministries before and within the veil, Christ's offices as atoning and mediating Priest were portrayed. 4. In the sacred and exclusive privileges the priests enjoyed, Christ's entire acceptableness and God's great delight in Him were impressively and constantly intimated. III. CHRISTIAN MINISTERS INHERIT MANY OF THE MOST AUGUST AND RESPONSIBLE SPIRITUAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PRIESTHOOD. 1. They have no priestly calling, yet are as distinctly commissioned and Divinely consecrated to their work. 2. Their solemn trust places them in highest ministries and responsibilities as mediators between God and human souls. 3. The Christian Church is commanded to maintain them in their ministry and esteem them very highly in the discharge of their sacred commission. 4. As bishops and shepherds of Christ's flock they are put in trust with the souls of their people; "they watch for souls." IV. MODERN PRIESTLINESS PERVERTS AND PROSTITUTES THE SACRED OFFICE OF THE MINISTRY IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. 1. Its offensive assumption of spiritual supremacy is in defiance of Christ's law of equality and brotherhood among believers. 2. Its officious intrusion between God and men is an affront to the unfettered liberty and right of every one to seek God for himself, and is an infringement upon the mediatorship of Jesus which always avails for all. 3. Its daring pretensions of altar ministries is a perversion of New Covenant doctrines; neither altar nor sacrificial rites remaining now within the Church. 4. Its appalling misleading of seduced souls, who rest on such beguiling priestliness for spiritual safety, instead of wholly trusting Christ, is sufficient to fill Christian hearts with indignation and to cover the very name of "priest" with anathemas. There is now no priest but Jesus Christ. (*Ibid.*) *Qualifications and ministries of God's priests*:—I. CONSECRATION WHOLLY THE WORK OF ANOTHER. II. PERFECT CLEANNESS THE INITIAL REQUIREMENT. III. INVESTITURE IN HOLY ATTIRE. To Moses it had before been said, "Thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, for glory and beauty." Those garments had been made. 1. All the adornments of grace have been prepared for us; wait in readiness for us. 2. A moment

of intensest joy to Moses when he brought forth those prepared garments for adornment. Nor less to Christ when He clothes the soul "with the garments of salvation." 3. Attire symbolic of sacred qualities. They were of blue, purple, scarlet, fine-twined linen, with connecting chains and ouches or settings of gold, indicating: (1) Heavenly-ness of character (typified by the blue). (2) Purity (typified by the white linen). (3) Official dignity (typified by the scarlet and purple). (4) Divine power of sustaining others (typified by the chains and ouches of gold); gold being used in the Tabernacle as a symbol of Deity. IV. ADORNED WITH THE CROWN OF HOLINESS. On his head was placed "the holy crown, the golden plate." (1) A "crown" is the symbol of kingship; it declares the royalty of consecrated souls, "kings unto God." (2) Holiness inscribed on the crown: it declares that the highest dignity of man is moral rectitude, spiritual sanctity. That plate bore the inscription, "Holiness to the Lord." It implied that—1. The vindication of that "holiness" was the avowed object of his priestly service. 2. Bearing that inscription on his brow among the people, during his priestly ministries, asserted that God's holiness had been and was being adequately maintained. 3. Entering into God's presence with that inscription was evidence that God acknowledged the fact of His holiness being maintained. V. THE BADGE OF MEDIATORSHIP. "Breast-plate." Bearing others' names is the crowning glory of the Lord Jesus. VI. SPIRITUAL ANOINTING. That "holy oil" is the "unction from the Holy One." 1. The plenitude of the Spirit; and—2. The graces of the Spirit; and—3. The efficient power of the Spirit, are essential to a priestly life of sanctity and service. VII. QUALIFICATION BASED ON SACRIFICE. 1. The scene suddenly changes, and the gloriously attired and anointed priest stands as a sinner by the sin-offering. For sin must be expiated even for the most privileged souls. (1) Its blood sprinkled upon the altar indicated that appeasement was demanded or ever they could approach that altar in ministry. (2) Its body being consumed without the camp declared what their doom would be did justice exact its due. (3) But the blood on the altar and accepted, announced complete propitiation and acceptance. (4) While the choice inward parts consumed on the altar fire, testified that God's claim of inward perfectness was satisfied. 2. The burnt-sacrifice summoned them to absolute self-devotion; for God will receive no less in any who avowedly become His. "His zeal must consume us." 3. But in the consecration-offering they yielded themselves up to God with gratitude and gladness: as those who reach towards the self-devotion of Jesus—"I delight to do Thy will; yea, Thy law is within my heart." VIII. APPLIED SACRIFICIAL GRACE. "Moses took the blood of it, and put it upon the tip of Aaron's ear," &c. 1. The value of sacrifice, which had before been accepted for them, was now applied to them. 2. The meaning of sacrifice, also, was now urged upon them: all life laid out for God, and in His service. IX. SYMBOLIC OFFERINGS PRESENTED TO GOD. 1. Inward perfectness: perfectness in the reins, and in the heart; indicating the bringing, on their part, into God's employ of their purest affections, and highest virtues, and noblest intelligence. 2. Outward developed perfectness of character; represented in the unleavened anointed bread that constituted the meat-offering. It is only in Christ's perfectness—a perfectness to be appropriated by us—that we can present such offerings before God. X. SIGN OF DIVINE ACCEPTANCE. 1. Being sprinkled by the blood which first had been sprinkled and accepted upon the altar conveyed the fact that God received their consecration: that themselves, their office, and all its various functions were placed under the sanction and the acceptableness of the blood. 2. The sprinkling of the holy anointing oil symbolically connected the Holy Spirit's grace with those offices into which God was, and is, pleased to call His people. 3. Their feeding upon the sacrifice signified the communication of strength, for we are nourished by food; and suggested the fellowship now established between them and God. (*Ibid.*) *Clothed and anointed for service*:—Moses having, in obedience to the Lord's command, gathered all the congregation to the door of the Tabernacle (vers. 3, 4), "brought Aaron and his sons, and—I. WASHED them with water" (ver. 6). We must bear in mind that in this ceremonial Aaron is made to be representatively what Christ is intrinsically, while Aaron's sons represent the Church, as she is in Christ. This ceremonial was "to hallow," sanctify, or set apart—Aaron and sons "to minister unto" the Lord "in the priest's office" (Exod. xxix. 1). Jesus, "sanctified" of Father (John x. 36; Heb. v. 4-6), did also sanctify Himself for His people's sake (John xvii. 17-19). 1. Aaron's sons must be "clean," to "bear the vessels of the Lord" (Isa. lvi. 11). By nature all are "as an unclean thing" (Isa. lxiv. 6); nor can any wash him-

self (Jer. ii. 22); but God can cleanse the vilest (1 Cor. vi. 9-11), and does so in His grace and mercy. Jesus sanctifies "the Church" "with the washing of water by the Word" (Eph. v. 26; John xv. 3); and none can draw nigh to God without such "washing" (Heb. x. 22; Tit. iii. 5). 2. Clothed (vers. 7-9). In the holy garments made for Aaron, "for glory and for beauty" (Exod. xxviii. 2; see Isa. iv. 2, marg.), Christ is shadowed forth as the God-man, Priest, Saviour, King; able to meet His people's every need for time and for eternity. Moses put on—II. AARON—1. The coat. The Lord clothes (Isa. lxi. 10; Zech. iii. 4, 5). "Body," "prepared" (Heb. x. 5); "the Word . . . made flesh" (John i. 14). 2. Girdle, emblem of service (John xiii. 4; Luke xii. 37). Jesus, Servant (Isa. xlii. 1; xlix. 6; liii. 11). 3. Robe; blue, heavenly, Jesus, "the Lord from heaven." There, even when on earth, returned thither; will come from thence (1 Cor. xv. 47; John iii. 13; Mark xvi. 19; Phil. iii. 20). Heavenly in nature, character, all. Where Jesus is, there is heaven. 4. Ephod. Same materials as glorious inner covering of Tabernacle. (1) Gold and blue, betokening the Divine and heavenly Man Christ Jesus, God "manifest in the flesh" (John iii. 31; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Luke i. 35). (2) White and scarlet. Of spotless purity, and obedient unto death (Heb. vii. 26; Phil. ii. 8). (3) Purple. "King of glory"; "King eternal" (Psa. xxiv. 7-10; 1 Tim. i. 17; Zech. ix. 9; Luke xix. 34-38). 5. Curious girdle, like ephod. "Righteousness" and "faithfulness" of our "Great High Priest" (Isa. xi. 5; Heb. iv. 14). 6. Breastplate. Jesus bears His people on His heart, proof of love. He loves to end (John xiii. 1). "Gave Himself" for Church, and now appears "in the presence of God for" His people (Eph. v. 25; Heb. ix. 24). 7. Urim and Thummim in breastplate, by which the mind of God was made known. Literally, "Lights and Perfections." Jehovah Jesus, in the midst of His chosen ones, is "the Light" and outshining of the Father's glory (John viii. 12; Heb. i. 3); the Manifestation of His love (1 John iv. 9); the Declarer of His mind and will (John i. 18). 8. Mitre and crown (see Zech. iii. 5; vi. 11, 13). Essential holiness and purity of our High Priest and King, who bare the "iniquity of the holy things" of His people (Exod. xxviii. 38; Isa. liii. 11). Next see—III. AARON'S SONS clothed (ver. 13) in coats, girdles, bonnets "of fine linen" (Exod. xxviii. 40; xxxix. 8, 9, 27, 29). 1. Coats. Putting on "the Lord . . . Christ" (Rom. xiii. 14). 2. Girdles. Serving Him (Col. iii. 24; Heb. xii. 28). 3. Fine linen. Death and resurrection with quickened "seed" (1 Cor. xv. 36; John xii. 24). 4. Bonnets. Mind, intellect. A "royal priesthood" purified. Every thought brought "into captivity" (Eph. iv. 23, 24; 2 Cor. x. 5). 5. "For glory and for beauty" (Exod. xxviii. 40); which His people to share with their risen Lord (John xvii. 10, 22; Rom. viii. 30; 2 Cor. iii. 13, 18; Psa. xc. 17; Ezek. xvi. 14); as they shine for Him and reflect His image; "for as He is, so are," &c. (1 John iv. 17). 6. Woven. Righteousness wrought out (Rom. iii. 22, 25, 26; Eph. i. 20; Psa. cxxxii. 9; Rev. xix. 8); by the Head, Christ, who directs His "members" in the service of God. IV. ANOINTED. Moses having "anointed the Tabernacle, and all therein" (vers. 10-12), where Aaron was to minister, as type of Jesus, "minister" of "true Tabernacle" (Heb. viii. 2); then "poured" anointing oil on Aaron's head (Psa. xxiii. 5; cxxxiii. 2). Here Aaron stood alone, nor were his sons clothed till after his anointing. Jesus, holy from birth, yet anointed for service (Luke iii. 21, 22). "God anointed Jesus," &c. (Acts x. 38; Luke iv. 18); "above" those He graciously deigns to call His "fellows" (Psa. xlv. 7; Heb. i. 9). He must "have the pre-eminence" (Col. i. 18); being "above all," and "the Head" (Eph. i. 21, 22). Oil poured. "God giveth not the Spirit by measure," &c. (John iii. 34), but in sevenfold power (Isa. xi. 2, lxi. 1, 2; Rev. iii. 1); for service, death, resurrection (Acts ii. 22, iv. 27; Heb. ix. 14; 1 Pet. iii. 18). But the Spirit could not be given to His people till His atoning work was accomplished and Himself "glorified" (John vii. 39). Hence, till the sacrifices were offered, Aaron's sons were not anointed (ver. 30). Then, together with Aaron, because Head and "members" one (Heb. ii. 11). First, blood was put on ear, hands, feet (ver. 24), then Moses "sprinkled" it "upon the altar." After which, following the "wave-offering" (ver. 27)—typifying resurrection with Christ—"Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which was upon the altar, and sprinkled" upon them and upon their garments. Oil and blood, blood and oil (Exod. xxix. 21); significant of justification and sanctification, which are inseparably connected (1 Cor. vi. 11; 1 Pet. i. 2). Sealing and sanctifying (Eph. i. 13) are the work of the blessed Trinity. God not only cleanses and clothes, but anoints (Ezek. xvi.

9, 10; 2 Cor. i. 21, 22). Here see in type the sanctifying power of Jesu's blood shed for us, and Holy Spirit's work within, when the Father draws to Jesus those whom He has given Him (John vi. 37, 44, 45). Thus, behold Aaron and sons, washed, clothed, anointed—V. CONSECRATED, or set apart for service of God. The oneness of Christ and His people seen in Aaron and sons laying hands on head of each victim (leaning with weight, as word implies); Jesus—Antitype of offerings. His people partakers of the benefits resulting from His great work. 1. Sin-offering. Pardon and justification. 2. Burnt-offering. Acceptance and worship. 3. Ram of consecration. Consecration and devotedness, all in and through Christ. VI. FILLING THE HAND. See marginal reading of "consecrate" (Exod. xxviii. 41; xxix. 9). The personal reception and appropriation of the Father's Gift of love (vers. 25-28; 2 Cor. ix. 15), even Christ. His rich preciousness (fat and inwards), His life (cakes), His death (ram slain), His strength (shoulder). "All things are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. iii. 21-23); and all given back to God as burnt-offering, "a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. v. 2; Rom. xii. 1). VII. FEEDING AND COMMUNION (vers. 31-36) are needed to maintain the life given and consecrated to God. No fitness of service without. Seven days, complete cycle of time, as appointed by God. Some would rush into service directly the heart—through the operation of the Holy Spirit—has opened to receive Jesus; but oftentimes God sees fit to give long training. Only let God feed, strengthen, and fit for the service to which He calls, and then go forth in His strength. (*Lady Beaujolois Dent.*) *Lessons:—*

1. Of the office of the law, which prepares for the gospel. 2. A good life much available unto the understanding of God's Word. 3. None should take upon them the office of the ministry, but thereunto called. 4. Without the knowledge of God, all other science is vain and unprofitable. 5. No laws or doctrine to be brought into the Church, but by warrant from God in His Word. 6. That every good gift is of God, and that we can do nothing of ourselves. 7. No sacrifice, sacrament, nor priesthood out of the Church. (*A. Willet, D.D.*)

*The separation of Aaron and his sons:—*We are already familiar with the use that has been made of separation in the third age to inculcate the absolute necessity of holiness in order to intercourse with God. Abraham was separated from an idolatrous and wicked world, to be the head of a family and a nation that should be holy to the Lord; and accordingly, in comparison with the heathen world Israel as a whole was a priesthood, as is set forth in Exod. xix. 6: "Ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Observe now how the same principle is further carried out. From the entire nation one tribe, the tribe of Levi, is set apart to be, above all the others, holy unto the Lord. From the tribe of Levi, one family, that of Aaron, is set apart to be, above all the other families of the tribe, holy unto the Lord. And finally, from the family of Aaron a single individual, the high priest, is set apart to be, above all the other members of the family, holy unto the Lord. The washing with water (ver. 6) led the mind still farther in the same direction. The effect of this on the minds of the people may perhaps be illustrated in this way: Suppose you wish to give the idea of perfectly pure water to some person who has never seen it, and you have no means of showing him the genuine article; by taking water in different degrees of impurity, and leading him to look at the different specimens, beginning with that which is most impure and going on to that which is least, you will at all events set his mind in the direction of the conception which you wish him to attain. And in the same way, though there was no way open of showing Israel at this time a genuine specimen of that holiness without which no man can see the Lord, yet by these successive separations of officially (or, if you choose, artificially) holy persons, the mind of Israel was set in the direction of that holiness up to which the Lord was educating them. It must be remembered that they had the moral law to help them to translate the symbolical holiness into the reality, of which it was the mere expression in language addressed to the eye. While Aaron and his sons represented Israel, they typified Christ and His Church. (*J. M. Gibson, D.D.*) *Divine institution of ministry:—*The reasons why the Lord thus precisely appointed these priests, and would not leave it to every man to perform this office, were these and such like. 1. It was to be known that not every man—no, not any man but the Man Christ Jesus could appease God's wrath, satisfy His justice, and take away the sins of the world, reconciling us to God and putting us in assurance of eternal life. This could not be figured out better than by secluding all the whole host of Israel from this office and choosing but Aaron and his sons as types of Christ, this only able Priest, and there-

fore they only were chosen, and so by such ordinance the majesty, authority, and (if we may so speak) the propriety of Christ's office resembled and shadowed. 2. God was ever the God of order, decency, and comeliness, and therefore in His Church would have all things done accordingly, not enduring any to be an invader of another man's right, an intruder of himself into another man's office, and a busybody out of rule, out of order. Certain men, therefore, are appointed, and they only shall do it. Others, if they meddle, being strangers, because not called, shall die the death as you hear before. Thus hath He also in the New Testament established a ministry, and given some apostles, some evangelists, some pastors and doctors for the building up of His Church, &c. He also decreed that the contempt of these is the contempt of Him; and then judge you, first or last, what punishment will ensue. (*Bp. Babington.*) *The essential significance of the priesthood:—* The essential significance of the priesthood cannot be deduced from the etymology of the Hebrew word thus translated, since that is not clear; nor is the extra-Levitical usage of the word so restricted as to afford an unequivocal solution of the question. A direct declaration of the Mosaic conception is, however, given in connection with the Korahitic rebellion (Numb. xvi.); in which passage the notes of the priesthood are given by Moses himself as follows: 1. A Divine choice or call ("Whom He hath chosen"). 2. A right of Divine service ("Who are His"). 3. Holiness ("Who is holy"). 4. A right of Divine access ("Come near unto Him"). The priest was one who, having been Divinely selected, had accepted his call without reservation, and being possessor of an imputed righteousness, was privileged to draw near the Majesty from on high. A closer analysis might still further simplify this Mosaic conception of priesthood. Of the attributes just enumerated, it may be said that the second and the fourth are identical; then the first and the third rather belong to the prerequisites of priesthood than to its essence. The essential significance, therefore, of the priesthood may be stated to lie in its privilege of Divine approach. It will thus be seen that in a limited degree every Jew was, as the primary form of the covenant announced, a priest; nevertheless the right of Divine approach, restricted as it was to the court of the Tabernacle, was so meagre as to be unworthy of the name of priesthood. It was to the Aaronites, with their more tangible privileges of worship before the veil, that the name seemed more especially applicable; whilst to the officiating high priest alone was it permitted to occasionally enter within the veil, and participate in that highest access, in that most exalted priesthood, which was possible to Judaism. Guarded by so many restrictions, and rising through such gradations, how lofty the dignity, how sublime the privilege, of standing in the presence of the Holy One of Israel to worship and petition! The essential significance of the priesthood may be otherwise stated. For, if it be remembered that the privilege of Divine approach carried with it the privilege of representing others to whom such approach was denied, it may be said that the essence of the priesthood was *mediation*, that of the ordinary priests being indirect, and that of the high priest direct. Again, the essential attribute of the high priest, the privilege of access to the Holy of Holies, implying the purpose for which that access was made, the essence of the high priesthood, may be roughly described, as in some passages of the New Testament, and in popular theology, by its exceptional privilege of atonement. (*A. Cave, D.D.*) *The altar and the laver:—* As the sacrifices are ever leading us to the great altar of brass, and as the continual washings that are mentioned in this chapter will be ever turning us to the laver of brass, let us here, for a moment, fix our eye upon them. The one shows us pardon of sin by Christ's death, the other shows us purification of heart by Christ's Spirit. But why is there such a singular peculiarity in the construction of both altar and laver? The former was covered with the brass of the censers that had been held in the polluted hands of Korah, Dathan, and his company (Numb. xvi. 38); and the latter was formed of the brass that was obtained from the mirrors of the women (Exod. xxxviii. 8) who worshipped at the Tabernacle door, and had been used but too frequently to gratify the unholy feelings called forth by "the lust of the eye." I. THE BRAZEN CENSERS OF KORAH AND HIS COMPANY CONTRASTED VERY EVIDENTLY WITH THE GOLDEN CENSER OF A TRUE PRIEST. The gold of the latter marked its heavenly character and use, as we see also in the gold of the candlestick, of the table, and of the mercy-seat, or in the golden streets and golden harps of New Jerusalem. But nevertheless, out of these polluted materials, the Lord forms the altar where atonement for sin was to be made. Shittim-wood (very durable and incorruptible) is spread over with plates of

this brass. Is not this fitted to remind us that Christ had the "likeness of sinful flesh"—the shittim-wood being veiled and hid by the brass? In the very nature that sinned so presumptuously the Lord Jesus appears; and, wearing that nature, presents in it His offering—only, in His person it was so pure that the "Altar sanctified the Gift." When He arose and ascended, He threw off this obscurity, and was "the Golden Altar." II. THE LAVER, MADE OF THE MIRROR BRASS, HELD PURE WATER, THE TYPE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. In our very nature, which in our hands serves only the purposes of sin and vanity, the Redeemer exhibited purity—the very purity of the Holy Ghost, who dwelt in Him without measure! He took our true nature from the womb of the Virgin; and, assuming it to Himself, thereby made it holy. And so it became a holy vessel for the Spirit to fill. *The main ideas symbolised in the vestments of the high priest:*—The ephod with its girdle signified the beautiful character and the exalted service which are becoming to the Holy Place; and the shoulder-pieces and the breastplate, with the precious stones and the engraving on them, signified that the children of Israel as a whole, and each child individually, was borne on the strong shoulders and carried in the warm heart of their representative in the presence of the Lord, giving the conceptions of strength to sustain and love to cherish; the Urim and Thummim added the thought of heavenly guidance along a path that "shineth more and more unto the perfect day"; the pomegranates and bells on the blue robe of the ephod symbolised heavenly fruitfulness and joy; while the climax of all was reached in the golden graving of "Holiness unto the Lord." You see how rich was the symbolism of the high priestly vestments. And how expressive as types of the glory and the grace of our great High Priest! The Lord Jesus needed no priestly vestments; for He had the great realities, of which these were only the symbols. He really possessed the lovely character which was only symbolised in the ephod; and no "curious girdle" was needed to make it evident that it was a high and holy work in which He was engaged. His strength to save and His love for lost sinners were so conspicuous all through His strong and loving life, that onyx stones upon His shoulders or precious stones upon His breast would have been superfluous. No symbol of Urim and Thummim was needed for One who could say: "I am the Light of the world; He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Nor were bells and pomegranates needful on that garment hem, the very touching of which, in the spirit of trembling faith, brought health to a cheek that for twelve years had been pale, and joy to a heart that after every remedy had been tried in vain, had bidden farewell to hope (Luke viii. 43, 44). And why should there be a plate of gold with "Holiness to the Lord" inscribed upon it, on the forehead of One who could fearlessly issue the challenge: "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?"—One who was really, as the other was only symbolically, "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners"? Verily, in a far higher sense is it true of Him than it was of Aaron, that "Holiness unto the Lord" is "always on His forehead, that we may be accepted before the Lord." (J. M. Gibson, D.D.)

Ver. 8.—**The Urim and the Thummim.**—*The Urim and the Thummim:*—I. The Urim and the Thummim was something distinct from the twelve stones in the pectoral of the high priest. Evidently the breastplate with its jewels was outward and visible; the Urim and the Thummim were inward, and concealed beneath the ephod, for it is said of the former, "they shall bind the breastplate unto the rings of the ephod, that it may be above the curious girdle of the ephod." With regard to the Urim and the Thummim, on the other hand, it is enjoined "thou shalt put in" (enclose within) "the breastplate the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be upon" (next) "Aaron's heart when he goeth in before the Lord." Nor is it to be overlooked that, with carefully selected terms, Moses speaks of the stones in the breastplate being "set, or filled in," but the Urim and the Thummim he describes simply as "put in," as if the one had been fixed with elaborate art, the other merely deposited by the hand—dropped in. Nay, it is stated expressly that "Moses put the breastplate upon Aaron," and that, after he had thus put on him the breastplate, all gemmed and finished, "he put in the breastplate the Urim and the Thummim." The artificers, therefore, must have prepared the sacerdotal vestment, even to the stones of the breastplate, whilst Moses provided the Urim and the Thummim. II. Urim and Thummim are proper names susceptible of a very definite and obvious meaning. "Urim" might have been translated "light," or "manifestation," for it imports "a light or shining thing"; and "Thummim" might have been rendered "truth

or perfection," meaning, as it does, "the perfect or the true." III. If, however, the Urim and the Thummim be not the breastplate of the high priest, and something distinct from the stones thereof; if, likewise, it be entitled to the designations of "light and truth," a "perfect and a shining thing," being thus loftily characterised of God Himself, what else could it mean than the law as given on Sinai, and written by Moses, when he descended from the Mount? 1. It is to be noticed that, when the article is first introduced, Moses refers to it as already in existence, and not as a thing that needed to be prepared. "Thou shalt put within the breastplate the Urim and the Thummim"—all which accords wholly with the idea that the law was meant, it being already in possession of Moses, and known to all the camp. 2. Let it also be taken into consideration that the law received different names according to the light in which it was viewed. It is called "the Ten Commandments" when its moral precepts are numbered. It is designated "the table of covenant" when regarded as the tenure by which Israel held Canaan. It was spoken of as "a commandment" considered as being stamped with Divine authority. It went under the name of "judgment" when adduced as the standard that fixes all moral truth. And it is "a testimony" when meaning a public declaration of what God expects from His creatures. If, however, the law were thus denoted by expressions taken from some of its aspects and properties, there is nothing forced in the supposition that it may also have received the designation of "light and perfection" ("Urim and Thummim") as another formula by which briefly to signify its character as a whole. IV. And the appellations given both to the breastplate and the Urim and Thummim add probably to this view. The former is entitled "the breastplate of judgment," which can only mean the breastplate including judgment or containing the law. Urim and Thummim are likewise designated as "the judgment," that is, the law of Israel. It enhances the argument to consider that the terms "Urim and Thummim" ("light and perfection") answer precisely to the description God has given of His law: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my paths." Nay, "the law of Jehovah is perfect" (Thummim); "the law of Jehovah is pure, enlightening the eyes" (Urim). This explanation invests the practice of consulting the Urim and the Thummim with dignity and reasonableness. Were the Urim and Thummim a mere ornament of skilful jewelry, it would seem not only unmeaning, but a direct encouragement of idolatry to associate it with the revelation of the Divine mind. But let it be admitted that the law is within the sacerdotal robe, and it is at once apparent that the man who consults by Urim and Thummim is only advising with the high priest as to the statutes of Jehovah, and ascertaining their import from him who had been ordained to interpret them. Taking the Urim and the Thummim to mean the law, this article completes the typical character of the sacerdotal apparel, as pointing out the offices of Christ. The robe and mitre worn by Aaron denoted the priesthood of Christ; the golden plate on the forehead signified the royalty of the Saviour; and the Urim and the Thummim, if interpreted to be the law, would shadow forth the Redeemer's prophetic office. The view now taken throws light on several passages of Holy Writ. 1. To hide a law would, according to usual notions, mean anything but showing it reverence and obeying it with anxiety. Yet "Thy law," says David, "have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." The phrase, therefore, is strictly a Jewish one, and can only be explained by the custom now illustrated. The allusion is to the high priest depositing the law within his breastplate for the purpose of being consulted. 2. Throughout the whole of Psa. xl. Christ is shadowed forth in reference to the ancient priesthood, and in the words "I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is within my heart," the allusion is manifestly to Aaron carrying the law beside his heart within the breastplate. The meaning is, therefore, not simply that Christ is holy. But, first, it is to be understood that, as Priest of the Church, Jesus is prepared to fulfil all that has been typified in the law; and, next, that, as the Prophet of God, He alone can guide and sanctify. 3. The prayer, "O send forth Thy light and Thy truth; let them lead me," is just a request that the Urim and Thummim might be David's guide, so that he may not miss his way to God, or come by a forbidden road. But the Urim and the Thummim being the law, the Psalmist's desire was to approach God in the observance of those rites and in possession of that spirit which the law required. 4. The Jew ever turned to his high priest for information on all religious points, and guidance in all perplexing junctures, knowing that in him was hid a source of light and the means of perfection which could neither fail nor mislead. But the apostle asserts that the High Priest of the Christian profes-

sion is also thus gifted and benignant. "In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Within His breast there is a spring of knowledge as exhaustless—a law of holiness as authoritative—a beam of light as pure. He will lead in the paths of truth and holiness all who ask counsel at His lips. 5. It may be asked, To what are the Jewish phylacteries to be traced but to the Urim and Thummim of the high priest? There is a Divine command to bind the law as a bracelet on the hand—on the head, as a frontlet, but the practice of inscribing portions of the law on parchment and depositing them in a case is evidently the Urim and the Thummim on a smaller scale. Indeed, the idea of interpreting literally the order of Moses above alluded to must have arisen from observing what the high priest did with the scroll of the law entire, and a desire to imitate his practice. The view taken suggests some practical lessons. (1) It teaches the sinlessness of Christ; for, let the character of Jesus be surveyed in His type, as bearing the law within His heart, and it must be instantly felt that in One, of whom this was a just and chosen emblem, there could be no unrighteousness. (2) It shows the manner in which Christ executes the office of a Prophet. It is not by creating a new law, or giving direction independent of the law, for then would He not correspond with His type, the high priest, who drew his responses from the will of God written within his inspired scroll. It is by pointing us to the law which bears upon our case, through the influence of His Spirit, and explaining its precepts, and enforcing its sanctions. (3) Let the believer, from this statement, understand more exactly what is required of him in point of character as being a priest of God. God has called him to "the royal priesthood"; He has given him at once the crown of royalty and the mitre of priesthood. He must not, however, exult in this distinction without adverting to the qualifications it infers, but remember that, if a priest to God, he must place the law as a candle within his heart, and fasten on what the apostle, in allusion to the sacerdotal equipage, calls "the breastplate of righteousness." (*J. J. Bonar.*)

Vers. 22, 23. Moses took of the blood.—Consecration by blood:—1. There is, first, the selection of the victim. "Behold My servant whom I have chosen," is God's message to us concerning Him; and again, He says, "I have exalted one chosen out of the people"; and, in the New Testament, He is called "the Christ, the chosen of God" (Luke xxiii. 35). The Great Sacrifice, the propitiation for our sins, the lamb for the burnt-offering, is entirely of God's selection. And in this of itself we have the blessed assurance of its suitableness and perfection. 2. There is the transfer of the sinner's sin to this selected victim. Though in one sense this is done by God, through that same eternal purpose by which the victim was selected, yet in another sense, and as a thing brought about, or becoming a fact, in time, it is the sinner that does this when he accepts the sacrifice, and, putting his hand upon it, confesses his sin over it. 3. There is the death of the victim. Without that shedding of blood, which is the means of death, and the evidence of its having taken place, is no remission. 4. There is the transfer of this death to the sinner by putting the blood upon him. The sinner's death is first of all transferred to the Surety, who dies as the sinner's substitute. Then the Surety's death is transferred back again to the sinner, and placed to his account as if it had been his own. In confession we transfer our death to the Surety. In believing we transfer His death to ourselves, so that, in the sight of God, it comes to be reckoned truly ours. This transference of the Surety's death to us is that which is set before us by the putting the blood upon us. For blood means death—or life taken away; and the putting of blood upon us is the intimation the death has passed upon us—and that death, none other than the death of the Surety. Put yourself in the position which God asks thee to do; that is, believe the Father's testimony to the death of His Son. The moment that thou believest, the blood is sprinkled, the death is transferred, thou art counted as one who hast died, and so paid the penalty—and thou art forgiven, accepted, clean! 5. There is the sinner's new life thus received through death. Made partakers of Christ's resurrection and Christ's life, they go forth to do His will, in the strength of His risen life. It is as resurrection-men that they serve Him, and who are drawing from that resurrection-fountain daily treasures of life, wherewith to labour for Him who died for them and who rose again. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above, and make use of your risen life for duty, for temptation, for battle, for trial, for suffering. It will be sufficient for every time of need. 6. There is the entire consecration of the whole man to God, in consequence of His having thus died and risen. That which proclaimed them dead, in consequence of the applied death of the sacrifice, sets them apart for holy

purposes in God's house. Thus it is that the death and resurrection of our true ram of consecration, our better sacrifice, operate upon us. They "sanctify" us, as the apostle's expression is, in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate." The whole man, from head to feet, becomes a sacred thing, dedicated to the service of the living God. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*)

Ver. 33. **The days of your consecration.**—*Consecration and service* :—It seems singular and almost frivolous that the priests were commanded not to go out of the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation for seven days. This is our own practice. The accident has changed, but this is the philosophy of all calculated and well-set life. No priesthood is worth accepting that any fool may step into without notice, without preparation, and without thought. The great priesthoods of life are all approached by a seven days' consecration. Does the medical priest run into his priesthood without consecration? is he not hidden for many a day in the tabernacle of wisdom—in the tent in which he meets all the authorities of his science? For a long time he may not prescribe; for a considerable period he has but to inquire and to give proof of capacity and industry. A whole week of time—meaning by that some perfect period—must elapse before he goes forth authoritatively to feel a pulse, or to prescribe a remedy. Apply this to the preaching of the gospel. The preacher must be long time hidden, during which no man may suspect that he is a preacher; his silence may be almost provoking; people may be driven to inquire what the purpose of his life is: he says nothing; he never reveals himself; he looks as if he might be about to speak, but speak he never does; he is full of books and thoughts, and prayer seems to be written upon his transfigured face. What is the meaning of this? He is in the tent of meeting; he is in conference with the Trinity; he is undergoing consecration—in no merely ceremonial sense; in the sense of acquiring deeper knowledge of God, fuller communion with the truth, and entering into closer fellowship with all the mysteries of human life. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The spiritual application of this abiding of the priests seven days in the Tabernacle* :—1. Hesychius applieth it to the Pentecost, which was seven times seven days from the resurrection of Christ, and the apostles were commanded not to depart from Jerusalem till they had received the Holy Ghost, as these are not to go out of the door of the Tabernacle during the time of their consecration. 2. Lyranus would have understood by the seven days seven things from which the priests should abstain—long sleep, pleasure in eating, unprofitable actions, multiplicity of distraction, vanity of talking, variety of fiction, vileness of affection. 3. Some hereby would have signified that they which are to receive orders should exercise themselves with spiritual meditations in some retired place. 4. Some would have this a type of baptism, so such as were baptized did use to go seven days apparelled in white. 5. But these are fitter applications: That ministers should learn hereby to frequent the Church and to attend Divine things, or that these seven days may betoken all the time of this life, that we should not day or night, in prosperity or adversity, depart from the faith of the Church, or that the priests, as long as they live, should not depart from the observation of the Divine law, and should be admonished that all their life they are devoted to another's service; and the staying in the Tabernacle sheweth two principal duties of the priest—to learn somewhat of God or to teach the people; but he should teach what he hath learned out of Scripture, not out of his own brain. (*A. Willet, D.D.*)

CHAPTER IX.

VERS. 1-24. **Aaron therefore went unto the altar.**—*Aaron in the duties of his office* :—The duties of the high priest, as exhibited in this chapter, divide themselves into two general classes. Some of his services related exclusively to himself, and the rest exclusively to the people. Aaron, though a priest, was still a man, with all the wants and infirmities of men. He consequently needed atonement as much as those for whom he was to officiate. And before he was allowed to proceed with his duties for others, he was required to offer sacrifices for himself. 1. Aaron was first of all to offer a calf for a sin-offering. And it may be that this was intended to refer back to his great sin in the matter of the "golden calf," which he had been

prevailed upon to make for the worship of the people while Moses was in the mount. It is a hard thing to shake off the degrading recollection of any marked deed of wrong! The soil of sin tears upon his cheeks, that if he owned a world, he would willingly and gladly give it to have certain recollections of crime blotted from his mind. He was a pious man—a man who had solemnly consecrated himself to labours for the good of his kind; but the thought of his former deeds of shame haunted him like a demon, and clouded his brightest peace. Aaron had done a great evil in the sight of God, and the dark shadow of its remembrance followed him even into the honours of his high priesthood, and stood before him every time he came to enter into the Tabernacle of the Most High. 2. The second offering which Aaron was to make for himself was the holocaust, or whole burnt-offering. In addition to his special sin he was a common sinner with all other men. He needed justification by the blood of Jesus, just as everybody else. There is a sense in which all are equally guilty before God, the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the young and the old, the learned and the ignorant, the priest and the people. And the only deliverance from this common guilt, as from all other guilt, is through the one great offering of “The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” Even Aaron in his priesthood needs it just as much as the wickedest and vilest of the race. These preliminary and personal services having been attended to, Aaron proceeded, as God directed, to perform the duties of his office for the people for whom he was ordained. A sin-offering, a burnt-offering, a peace-offering, and a meat-offering had been prescribed, and his functions with reference to these he now proceeded to discharge. Let us, then, contemplate him in the solemn service. 1. Aaron’s first official duties were connected with the altar at the door of the Tabernacle, and were all performed in the presence of the people. Now, in order to understand the typical meaning of all this, it will be necessary to observe that Christ is at once the priest and the sacrifice. It was impossible to unite these two things in the type. They stand in the Levitical ritual as distinct, and they are not at all confounded together in the great mediation of Calvary. But we must bear in mind that Christ is at the same time the victim and the High Priest who officiates in offering that victim. When He was led forth to His immolation, He was the lamb without blemish and also the one who was to lay its body upon the fire, and sprinkle its blood upon the altar. As the apostle tells us, “He offered up Himself.” He is the great High Priest who officiated at His own immolation. It was He Himself that presided at the awful ceremony, in which all His joints were relaxed, and all the binding ligaments of His being cut asunder, and all the tender parts of His most interior nature torn out for burning—and His body, soul, and spirit, laid down as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. It was by His own will that the blow was struck; that the blood flowed; that every covering and protection was torn off; and the whole blessed Christ reduced to a mangled and lifeless mass around and upon the altar of God. And it is this very fact that so infinitely ennobles, exalts, and dignifies Christ’s sacrifice. It was a willing surrender of Himself to death. There is a very remarkable expression in the fifteenth verse to which I desire to call your particular attention in this connection. You read there that Aaron “took the sin-offering for the people, and slew it, and offered it for sin.” A stricter rendering of the original, as noted by various critics, would be, “He sinned it,” or, “He made it to be sin.” The same diction occurs in chap. vi. 26. The idea is, that the sin-offering somehow had the sin transferred to it, or laid on it, or was so linked with the sin for which it was to atone as to become itself the sinful or sinning one, not actually, but imputatively and constructively. The animal had no sin and was not capable of sinning; but, having been devoted as a sin-offering, and having received upon its head the burden of the guilty one who substituted its life for his own, it came to be viewed and treated as a creature which was nothing but sin. And this brings us to a feature in the sacrificial work of Christ, at which many have stumbled, but which deserves to be profoundly considered. Jesus died, not only as a martyr to the cause He had espoused, not only as an offering apart from the sins of those for whom He came to atone, but as a victim who had received all those sins upon His own head, and so united them with His own innocent and holy person as to be viewed and treated, in part at least, as if He Himself had sinned the sins of all sinners. “The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” “He made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us.” 2. Having attended to what was to be done with the sacrifices at the altar, in presence of the people, the next duty of Aaron, as the high priest, was to enter into the sanctuary and the most Holy Place

with the blood of the sin-offering, as directed in Exod. xxx. But before entering upon this second grand department of his priesthood he "lifted up his hands towards the people, and blessed them." It was a very significant act. It was as if he were emptying over them from his bloody hands all the effects and virtues of that blood. And it pointed forward to those gracious transactions of the Lord Jesus subsequent to His offering of Himself for us, and prior to His ascension into heaven. But having thus spread his hands in blessing towards the people, Aaron "went into the Tabernacle," and was hidden from the view of the solemn worshippers. How beautiful the connection between type and Antitype! Of our Aaron it is written, "He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven";—"while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight." Aaron was to enter into the Tabernacle with the atoning blood of the victim slain without. "But Christ being come an High Priest of good things, which were to come, entered into a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, not by the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood. . . . For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Moses, as the representative of Jehovah in these transactions, accompanied Aaron into the holy places, and delivered over to his care all the vessels of the sanctuary, and put the ordering of all the sacred services into his hands. And thus also hath Jesus "received from God the Father, honour and glory." But Aaron did not stay in the Tabernacle. He went in after the morning sacrifices were made; but before the evening sacrifices he again "came out, and blessed the people." The soul kindles as we proceed with these ancient types. They portray so beautifully the grand mysteries of redemption's progress. When I read of Aaron returning from his duties in the Holy Place the words of the bright angels that kept guard at the Saviour's ascension gather new preciousness. "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." When Aaron came out of the Holy Place, it was to bless the waiting people. And so it is written of our great High Priest in heaven—"Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Most people are afraid of the Saviour's second coming, and never think of it but with dread. It is because they have not sufficiently considered its nature, and what it is for. It is not to curse, but to bless. It is not to distress, but to heal and save. It is not a thing to be dreaded, but to be prayed for and most earnestly desired. It is the event that is to finish our redemption and complete our bliss. When Aaron came out of the Holy Place, "the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people." Nor shall it be otherwise when Christ's epiphany shall occur. Then shall Jerusalem's light come, and the glory of the Lord arise upon her. Then shall the pure in heart see God, and the righteous behold the King in His beauty. When Aaron came out of the Holy Place, "there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering and the fat." These things had been "made sin." It was the exact picture of what is predicted concerning the reappearance of our great High Priest (2 Thess. i. 7-9; Mal. iv. 1; Heb. x. 26, 27). But the fire that darted forth before Aaron, and burned up what was accounted to be sin in that congregation, touched not one of the waiting worshippers. They saw it leap out with lightning fierceness, and lick up the guilty mass in a moment, but it came not near either of them. Not a saint of God shall be burned by the terrific fires of the Great Day. When the wicked are cut off, they shall see it. But He who upholds the worlds, yet marks the sparrow's fall, says to His people: "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads: for your redemption draweth nigh." Nay, when the congregation of Israel saw the fires, "they shouted" and adored. They "fell on their faces" for very ecstasy, and holy worshipful admiration. They had expected much, but the thing transcended their most rapturous imaginings. And so, in the day of our Saviour's coming, there is a joy, and glory, and holy exultation, and adoring gladness, for the people of God, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) **For to-day the Lord will appear unto you.**—*Sacrificial preparation for Jehovah's appearing*:—Who would see God? Let the soul make ready. To whom will God show Himself? They who make ready by sacrifices. 1. TO SEE THE LORD DEMANDS SPIRITUAL PREPAREDNESS IN MAN. 1. For man to meet God without readiness would entail on him terror and death. 2. But man may meet God with readiness, prepared

even to behold His glory. 3. When man meets God thus prepared, the meeting is propitious and privileged. II. SACRIFICIAL MERITS PREPARE MAN FOR SEARCHING MANIFESTATIONS OF GOD. 1. By effecting the complete removal of his sin (by sin-offering), and therefore cancelling his condemnation. 2. By presenting an offering of self-devotion (burnt-offering), and thereby obtaining the Divine favour. 3. By conciliatory acts of propitiation (peace-offering), thus removing all estrangement. 4. By covenanted communion with God (meat-offering); fellowship with God in the sacrificial feast. When Jehovah meets a soul thus "made nigh" by sacrificial merit, not only is there "no condemnation," but "access unto grace" is assured, and even "joy in God" (*cf.* Rom. v. 1, 2, 11). III. AMID MOST GLORIOUS DIVINE MANIFESTATION THE SOUL PREPARED BY SACRIFICE STANDS FEARLESS AND BLEST. 1. Revelations of God come now to privileged souls, and are "times of refreshing." 2. The unveilings of death, which will bring the soul to God's clear presence, will not terrify the believer: it will be "far better." 3. The Lord's appearance "in great glory" at the judgment will be welcomed with joyous acclaim by those who "look for His appearing." 4. And in the splendour of heaven the ransomed hosts will stand without rebuke, realising in God's presence "fulness of joy." (*W. H. Jellie.*)

Advent glory:—Sometimes, perhaps, you have passed in the daytime through some public place where at night there was to be a magnificent exhibition of pyrotechnic art, and you have seen the figures that are to be lighted up as they stand ready for the exhibition. They are very plain and common-looking. You can see in the rude outlines the forms of men, the crown upon the kingly brow, and the jewels that flash from it; but there is no beauty and glory whatever about them. But wait till the eventide, till the sun goes down, and the master of ceremonies appears on the scene, and suddenly, at the signal, perhaps of a trumpet-blast or a chorus of melody, the lights are turned on and a blaze of glory lights up the scene. Every figure stands out in radiant light, and the whole scene is illuminated, transfigured, and seems almost supernatural. So it will be when our Master appears, and these bodies of humiliation shall be lighted up with His brightness, and all the members shall shine with the beauty and majesty of their living Head, and He shall reveal all His glory in His heavenly Bride. Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people, and blessed them.—*A solemn benediction*:—I. In the relations of men to Jehovah there are those who attain a higher life of privilege and of power. The high priest alone was empowered to bless. His was a spiritual elevation above the priests. 1. Conscious nearness to God is not equally attained by all. 2. Sacred power from God is not equally derived by all. II. HIDDEN FELLOWSHIP WITH JEHOVAH IS THE SOURCE OF EXALTED QUALIFICATION, THE SPRING OF BENEFICENT SPIRITUAL POWER. Aaron had spent solemn seasons during the seven days enclosed within the Tabernacle. It nerved his heart for his high task; it gave him assurance as he assumed the high function of blessing the people in Jehovah's name. But after that official act he went into more intimate fellowship and prayer with God (*ver.* 23); and when he came forth he again "blessed the people." It was the act of one whose soul was full of conscious power, to whom it was no longer an official trust and duty to bless, but a delight and privilege; it was the outflowing of a soul all ardent and adoring. 1. Blessings can only flow from a soul itself rich in the affluence of blessedness. 2. Affluence of blessedness can only be won by the most intimate communion with the Lord. III. THEY WHO LIVE AN ELEVATED SPIRITUAL LIFE ARE RICH BENEFACTORS TO A SINFUL WORLD. 1. They draw power from God which does not rest unused, but goes forth in blessing others. 2. They exert salutary and saving energy among men, by which earthly life is sweetened, and spiritual health is imparted, and Christian peace is bestowed. 3. Their very prayers, unheeded as factors of good, win daily benediction from Heaven on many hearts and homes. 4. As a daily influence in society such elevated souls shed a benign grace, making social circles purer, kinder, less selfish and sinful, more gentle, peaceful, and Christian. 5. In all their active ministries for Christ they are potent for good. They cannot "lift up their hands towards the people" but gracious results ensue. Thus should every Christian seek to be a "light of the world," "salt in the earthen." Therefore let each—(1) Live a life of nearest intercourse with the Lord—a "life hid with Christ in God"; (2) fulfil the solemn office of gracious intercessors for men, winning blessings by secret prayers. (*W. H. Jellie.*)

Blessing the people:—I. THE RECOGNITION OF MAN'S GREATEST NEED, *viz.*, GOD'S BLESSING. Probably the formulary employed was that recorded in Numb. vi. 23-27, or *Psa.* xc. 17. What a complete and comprehensive blessing! Man needed the face of God to shine upon him—God's reconciled, cheering, transforming face, the face of his

Father and King. The peace of God alone could remove remorse for the past and dread apprehensions for the future. Here, then, was the bestowment of all needed grace, the earnest as well as preparation for final glory. These blessings centre in and flow from Christ with—1. Infinite fulness. 2. Inestimable graciousness; for all men and all time. II. THE DECLARATION OF GOD'S GREATEST JOY, *viz.*, BLESSING MEN. He is slow to anger, and delights in mercy. Aaron, standing with outspread hands, was the representative of God as well as of the people; and in the words of the Lord, as well as in His name, he pronounced the blessing. God blessed man—1. In equity. He had not connived at iniquity, had not accepted man into His confidence and communion without obedience and satisfaction. 2. Out of the sanctuary. The high priest came out of the Tabernacle and blessed the people; and God still pronounces His best and brightest blessing out of Zion, where His name is recorded, His worship observed. 3. In connection with human means. It was the blessing of God, but it passed through the lips of Aaron. God employed and honoured human agency. (*F. W. Brown.*) *Christ's priestly blessing*:—Jewish priests were required to give the blessing—or, as we say, “pronounce the benediction”—at the close of their religious meetings, as the ministers of the gospel do now. And this was especially done at the close of the solemn service here among the Jews every year on what was called “the great Day of Atonement.” We know what the words were which the priests used on these occasions. We find them in Numb. vi. 24–26. They are these: “The Lord bless thee and keep thee: the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.” These words are very beautiful. But then the Jewish priests could only use them as a kind of prayer. But they had no power to give the people these blessings. And here we see the great difference between all other priests and Jesus, our heavenly Priest. He not only speaks the words of blessing, but He really gives the blessings those words represent. This was what He meant when He said to His disciples, “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you” (John xiv. 27). The world, or the people in the world, can only wish or pray that we may have peace. But Jesus can give peace. Yes, and not only peace, but pardon, and hope, and joy, and grace, and every blessing that we need, Jesus is able to give. He came to bless the world. He did bless it while He was in it. He “went about doing good.” He was scattering blessings wherever He went. And He is doing the same still. He loves to bless; and the store of blessings He has to draw upon is so large and full that it never can fail. Look at yonder sun. For thousands of years it has been shining away all the time; and yet the sun has as much light to give to-day as it had in the day when God first made it. Or look at yonder ocean. It has been giving up its water to supply the springs and fountains of the earth ever since it was made; and yet there is as much water in the ocean to-day as there was thousands of years ago. And so it is with Jesus. For thousands of years He has been giving away blessings continually; and yet He has as many to give to-day as though He had never given one before. He came to bless the world. He has blessed it, and He is blessing it still. He is blessing nations and families and individuals in such a way as nothing else can bless them. (*Richard Newton, D.D.*) *There came a fire out from before the Lord.—The miraculous fire*:—I. SOME OF THE FACTS WHICH THE FLASHING FIRE CONFIRMED. 1. That the sacrifices were Divinely accepted. 2. That the priests were Divinely accredited. 3. That the Tabernacle was Divinely appropriated. II. SOME OF THE EFFECTS WHICH THE FLASHING FIRE PRODUCED. 1. Holy rapture. 2. Gratitude. 3. Sacred awe. 4. All the manifestations of God's glory to men, in nature and in revelation, are calculated and designed to awaken rapture and beget reverence. The gospel brings glad tidings of great joy; it begets reverence, for it shows us how great our sins and how holy our God. We see God as a consuming fire to consume sin and to purify from all defilement. Let us so live that hereafter we may enter into the glory unchanging and eternal. Rapture and reverence will characterise the delight and worship of heaven. (*F. W. Brown.*) *God's acceptance of the sacrifices*:—I. THE TESTIMONIES OF GOD'S ACCEPTANCE. These were of different kinds. 1. Ministerial. Moses and Aaron having finished all that they had to do within the Tabernacle, came forth and “blessed the people.” In this they were—(1) Types of Christ. Showing what He would do as soon as He had finished His sacrifice: He blessed His disciples (Luke xxiv. 50, 51) as He was taken up to heaven; and He sent the promised blessing of the Holy Spirit quickly thence (Acts ii. 33; iii. 26). (2) Examples to ministers. Showing what all ministers are empowered to declare to those who rely on the Great Sacrifice. They are to stand forth in the

very name of God and proclaim pardon and peace to all (Acts xiii. 38, 39). 2. Personal. In two ways did God Himself, by direct testimonies, apart from all indirect human agency, manifest His acceptance. (1) He displayed His glory before all the people. Now we have no such visible manifestation, but we have instead, as direct testimonies from God, "the Spirit of God witnessing with our spirit." and "the love of God shed abroad in our hearts." (2) He sent fire upon the sacrifice. Showing what fiery indignation they deserved, but that He had turned it aside from them and caused it to fall on the altar. II. EFFECTS PRODUCED BY THESE TESTIMONIES OF GOD'S ACCEPTANCE. Visible objects affect us strongly; the people now were deeply impressed with what they saw. They were filled—1. With exalted joy. Had they not been taught to expect this manifestation they would have been terrified thereby, as Gideon and Manah (Judg. vi. 21, 22; xiii. 19–22); but being prepared, they rent the air with their shouts. The inward triumph of Paul seems more suited to our dispensation (Rom. viii. 31–39), and that is both the privilege and duty of every one of us to enjoy. 2. With profound reverence. Humility united with joy. Even the seraphim cover their faces and feet before the throne; glorified saints cast their crowns at the feet of Him who sitteth thereon. Exalted joys should be tempered with adoration. Illustrations will be found in Gen. xvii. 3; Exod. iii. 6. Learn—(1) To lay no stress on transient affections. Such a state of feeling in the people ought to have issued well, but soon passed away when temptation arose. (2) To be thankful for the advantages we enjoy. We are apt to envy the Jews their privileges: they walked by sight, we walk by faith. But our High Priest "blesses us with all spiritual blessings." (*Chas. Sineon, M.A.*) *Gracious fire*:—I. FIRE SEALS WITH HEAVEN'S OWN SEAL THE ATONING RITES. Wherefore comes the fire forth? Is it to seize the guilty sons of men? Is it to hurl on them deserved wrath? Far otherwise. It comes with olive-branch of peace. It settles on the altar. It feeds on the victim as its feast. Then it brings evidence of God's delight. Then it fills hearts with tranquil peace. The flame with blazing tongue proclaims, "Here is the sacrifice which God selects, approves, calls men to bring, and never will refuse." II. THE ATTESTING FIRE SPEAKS GOD'S ACCEPTANCE OF SUBSTITUTION. The altar victims were the foreshadowing of Christ. Faith, therefore, loves this scene. It is one of the wells from which it gladly draws new joy. It is one of the meadows of its richest food. But what is the antitype of the descending flame? The clear gospel page. Three distinct testimonies answer to this approving sign. 1. The angelic host, a shining train, which swept down from heaven at Jesus' birth. 2. The baptismal seal (Luke iii. 21, 22). 3. Transfiguration glories rest on Him, and a voice from the cloud proclaims, "This is My beloved Son." 4. The opened grave, guarded by the angels, for in the resurrection of Christ we have the fiery seal of an accepted sacrifice. When Israel's host beheld the fire of God, what were their feelings? "They shouted and fell on their faces." Sweet joy was theirs. Deep adoration warmed each heart. Exulting praise burst forth. Profoundest worship was their instant act. Shall we not do the like? God sent His Son to seek, to save. Oh, then, let every breath praise God! Let every hour of every day be inward worship! (*Dean Law.*) *Of the divers occasions of the sending of miraculous fire upon the sacrifices*:—1. One occasion was when in the confusion of things they had need of some unwonted confirmation; as when Gideon was appointed to be the deliverer of the people this figure was given him in that confused state to confirm him in his calling (Judg. vi. 21). 2. Another reason was when God's worship was to be maintained against idolatry and false worship; as when Elijah contended with Baal's priests the like miracle was shown (1 Kings xviii. 38). 3. And further when the Lord was pleased to give assurance of His favour and reconciliation after some sin committed; as when David had numbered the people, and the Lord being there-with offended had sent a great plague, He showed his acceptance of David's sacrifice by answering him by fire from heaven (1 Chron. xxi. 26). 4. By the sending also of fire the Lord gave assurance of His perpetual presence and assistance; as at the dedication of Solomon's Temple. Thereby He testified that the mount of Sion pleased Him. 5. And hereby also the Lord gave approbation of His own ordinance, as here He doth demonstrate Himself to be the Author of the legal priesthood. (*A. Willet, D.D.*) *The fire in the gospel*:—This fire which came from God upon Aaron's sacrifice representeth the spiritual force of the gospel. The fire hath four properties—to give light, to heat, to examine and try, to consume; so the Word of God is a lantern to our feet; it inflameth the heart; it trieth our life and doctrine; it consumeth and purgeth our sin. Ambrose here saith well, "Thou art the bush. I the fire in the bush; I therefore am as fire in the flesh, that I may give thee light and consume thy sins." (*Ibid.*)

CHAPTER X.

VERS. 1, 2. *Nadab and Abihu . . . offered strange fire.*—*The fall of Nadab and Abihu*:—Nadab and Abihu were no inconsiderable personages. They were the sons of Israel's priest, the nephews of Israel's leader, the head of Israel's princely elders. They had been with Moses and Aaron in the hallowed mount; they had looked upon the glorious vision of God as He appeared on Sinai; they had been chosen and consecrated to the priesthood; they had stood by and assisted Aaron in the first operations of the Hebrew ritual; and in all that camp of God's ransomed ones, Moses and Aaron alone had higher dignity than theirs. But, from the mount of vision they fell into the pit of destruction. They were accepted priests yesterday; they are disgraced victims of God's holy indignation to-day. An event so startling and melancholy, occurring at the very inception of the Mosaic ceremonies, challenges our special attention, and calls for serious thinking. I. Let us inquire, then, into the NATURE OF THE OFFENCE which called out this startling visitation upon these unfortunate men. The context shows that it was not one isolated and specific act of disobedience. It was of a complex nature, and involved sundry particulars, each of which contributed to make up the general crime for which judgment came upon the guilty ones. The special statute recorded in the ninth verse, of which this occurrence seems to have been the occasion, furnishes ground for the inference, that Nadab and Abihu had indulged too freely in stimulating drinks, and thus incapacitated themselves for that circumspection and sacred reverence which belonged to the priestly functions. And if this inference be correct, we have here another among the many sad exhibitions of the mischiefs wrought by indulging in a too free use of intoxicating liquors. The history of strong drink is the history of ruin, of tears, of blood. It is, perhaps, the greatest curse that has ever scourged the earth. But, although drunkenness was most likely the root of Nadab and Abihu's offending, it was not the body of their crime. If these men had not been first "set on fire of hell" by excessive indulgence in drink, they would never perhaps have been driven to the daring impiety which cost them their lives. The head and front of the sin of these men, as I understand it, was the presumptuous substitution of a will-worship of their own, in defiance of what God had appointed. In three points did they offend—first, in the time; second, in the manner; and third, in the matter of the service which they undertook. It was the prerogative of Moses or Aaron to say when their services were needed; but they went precipitately to work, without waiting for instructions, or asking for directions. It was for the high priest alone to go in before the Lord and offer incense at the mercy-seat; but they wickedly encroached upon His functions, and went in themselves. Never more than one priest was to officiate in burning incense at the same time; but they both together entered upon a service which did not belong to either. These things in themselves evince a very high-handed disregard of Divine order. But the great burden of their sin rested in the matter of the service. They "offered strange fire"—common fire—fire wholly foreign to the fire which God had kindled for such purposes. They thus obtruded what was profane into what was holy, desecrated God's ritual, cast contempt upon His institutions, put their own will-worship above His sacred regulations, and thus called down upon themselves a judgment which made all Israel tremble. II. Let us now consider some of the IMPLICATIONS, SURROUNDINGS, AND FORESHADOWINGS of this sad occurrence. The shadows of the future were linked in with the facts of the past. Scarcely had Christianity been constituted, until we find a foreign and fitful spirit insinuating itself into the operations of those into whose charge its earthly services had been given (see 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4; 1 John iv. 3). Along with pontifical power, came in great doctrinal and moral corruption. The one was a part of the other. Bishops retired from the pulpits to sit as spiritual lords, superior to all the kings of earth; the Virgin Mary was installed as the world's mediator; earthly priests assumed the work of intercession, and undertook to forgive and license crime for a price; the Church was driven to the wilderness; another Abihu in his drunkenness had entered the Holy Place, and was offering strange fire before the Lord. And the thing that hath been is the thing that is. Philosophy still has its additions to make to the Word of God. Heathenish pomp still moves to lift itself up in our temples. Human reason is still at work to devise ways to worship and please God which He has not commanded. Men are still found who claim authority to perform offices for the souls

of others, which belong only to our great High Priest in heaven. Thousands there are who flatter themselves that they are doing great things in their worship, though the spirit that is in them is not at all the Spirit of Christ. But it shall not always be so. There is a price annexed to all these usurpations and irregularities with regard to holy things. God has magnified His Word above all His name; and he that adds to or takes from it, has his reward specified, and his portion reserved for him. Nadab and Abihu were suddenly and miraculously cut off in the midst of their sin; and so shall it be at last with all the confederates in usurpation and wrong, whether secular or ecclesiastical. Fire from the Lord shall slay them.

(*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *Repulsive incense*:—I. THEIR OFFENSIVE OFFERING. 1. What rendered their incense odious to God? "Strange fire." (1) Not kindled by God. (2) Not mingled with blood. 2. What corresponding offensiveness may mar our offerings? The fire is "strange" when our religion or work is the outcome of—(1) Mere emotional fervour. (2) Mere intellectual excitement. (3) Mere feverish activity. (4) Mere self-glorifying religious effort. (5) Mere spiritual rhapsody.

II. THEIR RASH IMPIETY. 1. Fearless presumption. 2. Wilful disobedience. III. THEIR ALARMING DESTRUCTION. 1. Remember the God with whom we have to do. 2. The rebuke which presumption will receive. (*W. H. Jellie.*)

The sin of Aaron's sons:—I. HOW ELEVATION TO HIGH AND HOLY POSITIONS DOES NOT PLACE MEN BEYOND THE TEMPTATION AND LIABILITY TO COMMIT SIN. II. HOW THE COMMITMENT OF SIN MERITS, AND MAY MEET WITH SUDDEN CORRESPONDING RETRIBUTION. III. HOW SUCH RETRIBUTION, WHILE IT CONDEMNS THE SINNER, VINDICATES THE BROKEN LAW AND GLORIFIES THE LAWGIVER. 1. We may note that the punishment they received—(1) Condemns them here in the eyes of all Israel. (2) Showed the exceeding sinfulness of sin; and (3) The exacting demands and exalted dignity of the law. 2. God thus manifesting Himself as a consuming fire showed—(1) His jealousy, that He could not be openly and grossly insulted. (2) His power, that the fire which glowed in the cloud, which had kindly let them out of Egypt, protected them from their foes, and which consumed the burnt-offering on the day of consecration, had power to destroy, and, unless held in check, would consume all sinners. (3) His mercy, that while sin deserved punishment, and God had the right and power to destroy, He made judgment His strange work, and such retribution—as that which visited Aaron's sons—an exceptional thing. Let us learn that though worship must be voluntary yet it must be according to God's own appointed way. Liberty is not to be perverted into lawlessness. 3. Strange fire is offered upon God's altar when worship is presented with—(1) Unsolicited materials, or from (2) Unsanctified motives. Enthusiasm is holy ardour—literally, God in us—His own fire ascending to Himself. (*F. W. Brown.*)

Nadab and Abihu:—I. THE POSITION OF THESE TWO MEN. Regularly ordained priests of the Lord (Exod. xl. 12-16). They had a right, therefore, to burn incense before the Lord. II. THE CHARGE AGAINST THESE MEN (ver. 1). 1. The letter of the law was violated (chap. xvi. 12, 13). 2. The essence of this sin (ver. 3). (1) Emphasis to be placed on "I." "I will be sanctified," &c. (2) This implies that when deviations from Divine and clearly-defined instructions occur, the Lord charges that such deviations do not enhance His glory; neither is He sanctified in those who are guilty of such deviations. III. THE PUNISHMENT INFLICTED ON THESE MEN (ver. 2). The punishment indicates the unspeakable importance with which God regards implicit and strict obedience to the letter of all His ordinances. IV. THE CONDUCT OF AARON, THE FATHER OF THESE TWO MEN. "Held his peace." 1. How great the grace needed for this. 2. How exemplary the use of needed grace in such a trial as this. V. THE ACCUSTOMED MOURNING FOR THE DEAD WAS PROHIBITED IN RESPECT TO THESE MEN (ver. 6). Does not the rebellious element oftentimes enter into our mourning, and thus the grace of God, in bereavement, becomes of no practical value? VI. THE NEW PROHIBITION (vers. 8-11). The connection in which this prohibition stands suggests—1. That Nadab and Abihu were probably under the influence of some intoxicating liquor when led to offer "strange fire" before the Lord. 2. That such liquors have a tendency to unfit any one for any true spiritual exercise, because of their exciting nature. Lessons: 1. How profound a lesson is here taught in regard to the only acceptable manner of administering the ordinances of God's house—not with the strange fire of will-worship, nor by the slightest deviation from the prescribed order. 2. We learn the unfitness of those who minister in holy things, who neglect the proper observance of the ordinances, and teach men so to do. 3. Let us learn to submit to God's judgments, however severe. 4. Let us avoid everything that would

disqualify us for acceptable worship. (*D. C. Hughes, M.A.*) *Lessons* :—1. No new or strange doctrine to be brought into the Church. 2. God's election free, and of grace, not of any worthiness in man. 3. That God is no acceptor of persons. 4. God is to be glorified even in His judgments. 5. Of a double power of the Word, to life or death. 6. The bodies of the dead to be reverently used, and after a seemly manner to be buried. 7. That it is lawful upon just occasion to be angry. (*A. Willet, D.D.*) *Moral observations* :—1. In prosperity we must think of adversity. 2. Not to present ourselves before God with carnal, vile, and strange affections. 3. Wherein a man sinneth, he shall be punished. 4. To submit ourselves to the will of God. 5. That men should not for the occasion of private grief neglect the public business, especially in God's service. 6. Against the sin of drunkenness, especially in ministers. 7. That our sins are an offence unto Christ, and to all the celestial company. 8. Not to be too rigorous toward those who are in heaviness, and sin in weakness. (*Ibid.*) *Strange fire* :—Their sin was that to burn incense withal, they took not the fire from the altar of that which came down from heaven, and was preserved by the diligence of the priests till the captivity of Babylon, but other fire, which therefore is called strange fire because it was not fire appointed and commanded. Which fault in man's eyes may seem to have excuse, and not to deserve so fearful a punishment. For they were but yet green in their office and so of ignorance might offend, being not yet well acquainted with the nature of their office. Again, of forgetfulness they might offend, not remembering or thinking of the matter as they ought. Thirdly, there was no malice in them, or purpose to do evil, but wholly they aimed at God's service with a true meaning, although in the manner they missed somewhat. But all these, and whatsoever like excuses, were as fig-leaves before God, vain and weak to defend them from guiltiness in the breach of His commandment. 1. First, with what severity the Lord challengeth and defendeth His authority in laying down the way and manner of His worship, not leaving it to any creature to meddle with, but according to prescription and appointment from Him. Content He is that men shall make laws for human matters, concerning their worldly estate in this earth as shall be fittest for the place where they live. Laws against murder, theft, oppression, &c., but for His Divine worship He only will prescribe it Himself, and what He appointeth that must be done and that only, or else Nadab and Abihu their punishment expected, that is, God's wrath expected, in such manner as He shall please. 2. But doth not a good intent and meaning prevail with God, albeit the thing be not expressly warranted? Yourself judge by that which you see here, and in many other Scriptures. Had Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, here any ill-meaning towards God, or did they of malicious purpose offend Him and procure their own destruction? No; you must needs think their intent was good, but because they swerved from the Word, that good intent served not. The words out of Deuteronomy are not, you shall not do ill in your own eyes, "But you shall not do that which seemeth good"—good I say, and I pray you mark it, you shall not do that, but shall keep you to My commandment. Be it never so good, then, in my conceit, that is, be my meaning never so good, it profiteth not, neither shall excuse God's destroying wrath more than it did here these sons of Aaron. "There is a way," saith Solomon, "that seemeth good to a man and right, but the issues thereof are the ways of death." Such assuredly are all will-worships not grounded upon the Word, but upon man's will and good intent. "They shall excommunicate you," saith our Saviour Christ, "yea, the time shall come that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth God good service." What then? Shall his so thinking excuse his bloody murder? Joseph had no ill-meaning when he prayed his Father to change his hand and lay his right hand upon his elder son's head. What ill meant Joshua when he wished Moses to forbid those that prophesied? Micah's mother, when, according to her vow, she made her son two idols? Peter's meaning had no hurt in it when he forbade Christ to wash his feet; with a number like places in Scripture. Yet you know no good intent was accepted in these cases. No more shall it ever be when it is not agreeing to the Word, which only is a Christian man and woman's true and perfect guide. Let, therefore, these things take place within us, and never wrestle we against the Lord, for He is too strong for us, and His will must stand, not ours. Oh, why should it grieve me to be ruled by His word, seeing it is so sure a way for me to walk in? Or why should any teacher deliver to me that which he never received of God to be delivered to His people? If they crave obedience why should they be angry, that I pray to have it showed out of His Word whom only I must obey? He hath prescribed a form of

serving Him, that form He will accept and bless with eternal peace; all other forms He will abhor and punish. Nadab and Abihu preach so unto us and all flesh. They wish us to take heed by their harm. God is in other things full of patience, but in this He is full of wrath, and His authority to appoint His own worship, He will not endure it to be taken from Him by any man. (*Bp. Babington.*) *Nadab and Abihu* :—In this passage we have the law of worship announced, not in the measured statements of a statute, but in words of terror spoken with tongues of flame. What answer does the incident give us to the vital question, How can men worship God acceptably? I. THE CHARACTER OF THE WORSHIPPER IS A FACTOR OF IMPORTANCE. Those who, like the apostle, are “in the Spirit on the Lord’s day” —and every day may be a “Lord’s day”—are caught up into the realm of spiritual vision, and stand face to face with realities that on lower levels are at best the dreams and hopes of faith. Worship as an offering may be formal, though even for that to be acceptable there must be some preparedness of heart; but worship, in order to prove a revelation, must be spiritual, and in securing that the attitude of soul is everything. II. THE PURPOSE OF THE WORSHIPPER IS AN ELEMENT OF WHICH GOD MAKES ACCOUNT. Whatever other reasons influenced Nadab and Abihu to offer “strange fire,” it is evident that they had some selfish end to serve. God looks down into every pulpit, and into every minister’s heart, and judges every prayer, and criticises every sermon, and estimates the worth or worthlessness of the service offered, according as He finds or fails to find a singleness of purpose to honour Him the sovereign motive that originates and regulates it all. As God looks down on our Sabbath assemblies, in how many pews He sees men and women offering “strange fire,” instead of bringing the appointed sacrifice. The spirit of devotion that animates real service is omitted. III. THE PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP IS A MATTER TO WHICH GOD ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE. The numerous directions in the Jewish ritual looking to personal purity were all symbolic and significant of the value of character in the office of worship (*Psa. xxiv. 3, 4; 1 Tim. ii. 8; Heb. x. 22*). Both the old covenant and the new are imperative in insisting upon right character as essential to right worship. IV. THE MODE OF WORSHIP HAS ITS LIMITS OF IMPORTANCE. The Jewish ritual was complicated, but it was in all its parts significant. A distinguished writer has said that “whoever would write out the spiritual symbolism of the Book of Leviticus, would give the world a fifth Gospel.” Nadab and Abihu were punished for departing from the Divinely established order of service. The folly of men is never so apparent as when it sets itself up as being wiser than God. Under the Christian dispensation larger liberty of choice is allowed. Men are free to adopt such methods of worship as are most affluent in ministries to their spiritual life. But the old underlying principle which was sovereign in the Jewish ritual still remains in force. Any method of worship which is anything more than a means to an end, any ceremony which suffers the thought to go no further than itself, is radically defective. (*E. S. Atwood.*) *A sad incident* :—I. THE GRIEVOUS SIN OF NADAB AND ABIHU. II. THE SEVERE PUNISHMENT OF THEIR SIN. The punishment in its severity seems out of proportion to the sin. But on this question two considerations of great importance should be duly weighed. 1. The time at which the sin was committed. They were now getting the sacred ritual into full operation; and it was of essential importance that a people such as the Israelites were at this time should be taught that all sacred things should be reverently regarded, and all religious services performed in a devout spirit and becoming manner, and with minute attention to Divine directions. 2. The persons by whom the sin was committed. They were the elder sons of the high priest, and were consecrated to the holy office of the priesthood, “the very persons whose official charge it was to maintain” the sacredness of religious institutions. A severe punishment was necessary for the welfare of the nation. III. THE EXEMPLARY SUBMISSION OF AARON. IV. THE BURIAL OF THE BODIES OF THE OFFENDERS. What a sight that was passing through part of the camp—the dead bodies of two men recently so distinguished in relationship and office, now so distinguished as examples of the awful judgments of God, and in their priestly vestments too! How fitted to impress even the most frivolous with the sacredness of Divine institutions and the dread peril of violating Divine directions! V. THE MOURNING BECAUSE OF THE JUDGMENT UPON THE OFFENDERS. VI. THE LEGISLATION TO WHICH THESE THINGS GAVE RISE (*Lev. 10:1–11*). 1. The law. That the priests should abstain from every kind of intoxicating drink during their sacred ministrations (*cf. Ezek. xlv. 21*). 2. The reasons by which the law was enforced. (1) That their perceptions might be clear, and their judgment true

in the duties of their holy office (ver. 10). (2) That they might teach the people all God's statutes (ver. 11). (3) The law was further enforced by a stern penalty for its violation, "Lest ye die." VII. THE SUBJECT SUGGESTS LESSONS: 1. On worship. We should worship God in the way which He has appointed—with humility, with reverence, &c. 2. On sin and its punishment. Every sin, unless repented and forgiven, must be punished. But presumptuous sins, such as that of Nadab and Abihu seems to have been, are specially heinous and ruinous (*cf.* Numb. xv. 30, 31; Psa. xix. 13). 3. On submission to the will of God. Imitate Aaron in this. 4. On fitness for the service of God. Aaron and his sons might not touch, or even approach the dead, &c. The servants of God must keep themselves from everything that might defile them. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." 5. On temperance. The wise man will be temperate in all things and at all times. When about to enter upon sacred services it is specially advisable to abstain entirely from everything intoxicating. The inspiration for such services should not be spirituous, but spiritual. (*William Jones.*) *Strange fire*:—I. WHO OFFERED IT. Nadab and Abihu. The last one would have expected to be guilty of such a sin. They were not ignorant, but over-zealous people, who only imperfectly knew the law. But they were the sons of Aaron. Could hardly be ignorant of the sin they were committing. The best that can be said of them is that they were not sufficiently thoughtful. Ignorance and thoughtlessness are sinful in those with whom knowledge is possible, and who have many incentives to consideration. We should strive to know that we may more perfectly do the will of God. The great probability is that their sin was not merely sin of ignorance, but presumption. Preferred their choice to God's. II. WHAT THEY OFFERED. From chap. xvi., Numb. xvi. 18, 46, it is clear that they should have taken a coal from off the altar. Every act of worship was strictly prescribed. Intention to beget in the minds of the people a profound reverence for the will of God. In everything to consider His will first. To find their happiness in obedience. Instead of acting in accordance with the will of God they obeyed the impulse of their own proud and selfish hearts. It is likely that the time of offering was also wrong. III. HOW THEY WERE RECEIVED. They draw near and swing their censers. And suddenly "there went out fire," &c. (ver. 2). Their strange fire had been replied to with a fire more strange to them. They were struck dead as by a lightning-flash. A sudden and emphatic protest against their presumption. Learn—1. To study earnestly that we may more perfectly obey the will of God. 2. To avoid trifling with holy things and ordinances. 3. The instruments of sin may become instruments of punishment. With fire they sinned, by fire they were overthrown. 4. The very gospel, if abused, may become an instrument of condemnation. (*J. C. Gray.*) "*Strange fire*":—Ere that "eighth day" had closed (chap. x. 19), when Jehovah had sent fire from heaven to consume with delight the offerings laid upon His altar, in token of acceptance—yea, that very day Satan was again at work, this time with the sons of Aaron, leading them to offer—I. "*STRANGE FIRE*," in direct violation of God's command (chap. x. 1). His fire was to be ever burning upon His altar (chap. vi. 12, 13), continually fed by what ascended as "a sweet savour" to the Lord; and "strange fire," like strange incense (Exod. xxx. 9), was an abomination to Him. But man is ever prone to think his way, his fire, his incense as good or better than God's. And where God's Fire—*i.e.*, the Holy Spirit—has been manifestly working, there surely does Satan begin to work by his emissaries, as in the case of Jannes and Jambres (2 Tim. iii. 5-9; Exod. vii. 11, 22, viii. 18); and again with the "vagabond Jews, exorcists" (Acts xix. 6-17), in the days of St. Paul. Satan inspires "false teachers," "seducing spirits" (1 Tim. iv. 1; 2 Pet. ii. 1), who, like Nadab and Abihu, shall "bring upon themselves swift destruction." II. THE SONS OF AARON had been specially privileged. The sons of Aaron represent—as we know—the Church, whose members are also partakers of many privileges (Heb. vi. 4). But—as "they are not all Israel which are of Israel" (Rom. ix. 6), so all called Christians are not "Christ's"; and it is just in the professing Church that we may expect to hear of "strange fire," and false worship, inaugurated by "false teachers," who shall bring in destructive heresies" (2 Pet. ii. 1, R.V.); and "many shall follow their pernicious ways" (ver. 2, A.V.). Especially will this be the case as we approach the end of the age—"the last days"—when "perilous times shall come" (2 Tim. iii. 1). III. "*FIRE FROM THE LORD*," sent forth in judgment, as in the case of Nadab and Abihu. That fire is used of the Lord for judgment we learn from many passages in Scripture. See, as to the past—1. "The cities of the plain" (Gen. xix. 24-29), "making them an ensample," &c. (2 Pet. ii. 6; Jude 7). 2. At Taberah, because of

the complaining of the children of Israel (Numb. xi. 1; Ps. lxxviii. 21). 3. "The two hundred and fifty men that offered" "incense" (Numb. xvi. 2, 35; Ps. cvi. 18). 4. The captains and their fifties (2 Kings i. 10, 12). Then as to the future, we read—"Our God shall come: . . . a fire shall devour before Him," &c. (Ps. l. 3; see also xcvi. 3). "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed . . . in flaming fire," &c. (2 Thess. i. 7, 8); and "that wicked"—or lawless one referred to—shall be consumed (2 Thess. ii. 8). "A fire . . . from God out of heaven" shall devour those gathered against the saints and the "beloved city" (Rev. xx. 8, 9). And "the devil, that deceiveth them," shall be "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone" (ver. 10). He who had energised many with "strange fire" will be consigned to the "everlasting fire prepared," &c. (Matt. xxv. 41). Appalling indeed to think of these judgments to come; and while we speak of such things let us give good heed lest we should seem to have aught of the spirit of James and John, which called forth our Lord's rebuke (Luke ix. 51-56). Let us rather first test ourselves, and then in love warn others. He is ready to give the Holy Spirit—His purifying, guiding Fire to all who ask (Luke xi. 13). Lastly, observe—IV. AARON'S ATTITUDE OF silent submission to the swift and appalling judgment with which his sons were visited. "Aaron held his peace." Think of the agony of the father's grief, yet not a word! He knew his sons' great sin, and Jehovah's perfect justice. The silence of Aaron may also teach that our "Great High Priest" could not intercede for any guilty of the sin He declared should "not be forgiven" (Matt. xii. 31, 32; Mark iii. 28-30): "Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost," to which the "strange fire" seems to point. (*Lady Beaujolois Dent.*)

Clerical apostasy and usurpation:—Many a pious heart has been saddened, and sickened almost unto death, over the calamities that have befallen the camp of the Lord in the shape of apostasies, false doctrine, unholy living, and reckless usurpation. Who among us that could not tell the story of many a heart-rending fall in the Church of God! More than once have I seen the man in affluent prosperity a great patron of the Church, prompt in his place in all the services of the sanctuary, and esteemed as one of Israel's elders; but when reverses and bankruptcy came I have seen him turn aside to walk in the ways of the ungodly, the forger, the counterfeiter, the robber, and even the ribald blasphemer. Many a time have I seen the poor man in his daily toil, seemingly walking humbly with his God, and attentive to the things that relate to heavenly treasures; but when the tide of fortune came and gave him riches, or advanced him to places of influence and distinction, he forgot his Church and pious associations, and drifted away into pride like Lucifer's, or into covetousness as niggardly as Shylock's. I have seen men of the loudest professions; yea, men ordained to stand as watchmen on Zion's walls, secretly dallying with the demon of vicious appetite, until they became the reeling sport of boys upon the street, the shame of their denomination, and the tenants of ignoble graves. And history tells again and again of men whose heads reached unto the clouds, who in an unguarded hour came down, like some tall pine of the forest which makes the wilderness howl in its fall; of impious hands touching the holy vessels of God's sanctuary; of false incense burned in the holy place, until the very lamps and stars were hid, and the very house of salvation made a den of robbery and death. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*)

The sin of Nadab and Abihu:—These men were not at liberty to take each his own censer; there was a utensil provided for that action, and for any man to bring his own ironmongery to serve in such a cause was to insult the Spirit of the universe. This is how we stand to-day: every man bringing his censer—his own censer—which means the prostitution of personality, the loss of the commonwealth-spirit and of the recognition of the unity and completeness of the Church. There are men who spend their time in amending Providence: Nadab and Abihu represent two such men to-day. There are men who are always trying to naturalise the supernatural: this is what Nadab and Abihu did. They said in effect, "This evil fire will do quite as well; build your life on reason; order all the ministry of your life by coherent and cumulative argument; drop the ancient words, and choose and set new words of your own; there is no supernatural: let us banish superstition and inaugurate the reign of reason." Nadab and Abihu had a kind of church, but a church without the true God—an uninhabited shell, a mockery, a base irony—the baser because it was in a sense religious. There are men who substitute invention for commandment. This is what Nadab and Abihu did: they invented a new use of the common censer; they brought into new service common fire; they ventured to put incense thereon when only the pontiff of Israel was allowed to use such incense; they invented new Bibles, new laws, new churches,

new methods; they were cursed with the spirit of extra independence and individuality, with the audacity of self-trust—not with its religious worship and adoration. This all occurs every day, and it occurs quite as rudely and violently in the current and flow of our own history. All this invention and all this deposition of God and of law comes just as swiftly after our conscious realisations of the Divine presence as this instance came swiftly upon the conscious benediction of God. "There is but a step between me and death." It would seem as if a universe might intervene between true prayer and the spirit of distrust and cursing—yet not a hair's-breadth intervenes. A man on his knees is next to the worst self, namely, a man with clenched fists defying the heavens. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *A solemn judgment*:—This judgment that fell upon the two sons of Aaron seems very severe. But notice that the high and dignified position they occupied made sin, in their case, far more grievous and calculated to do much more extensive mischief among Israel, than if it had been perpetrated by some one occupying a less conspicuous position in the state. Though sin is in itself always the same, yet, committed in the high places of the land by those who occupy in Church or in State lofty and responsible positions, it has an aggravation and an enormity that it has not when committed by those who occupy lowlier and obscurer spheres in the land. Not that the sin differs in its absolute and personal guilt, but that it differs in the influence it spreads around it. Evil in high places is very contagious—is seen by many, and imitated by more. And, in the next place, this was the commencement of a new economy. The commander of an army, or the commander of a fleet, must insist upon rigid discipline at the commencement of the military expedition, or of the sailing of the fleet; if he do not, the issue is disastrous to the soldiers and the sailors, as it will be injurious to great interests and painful to him. Therefore, at the commencement of a new economy, it was requisite that it should be seen that the least of God's laws may not be transgressed with impunity; and that the authority of God alone, struck upon the least and the loftiest, must be the great reason why there should be instant, unqualified, and undiluted obedience. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *Speedy judgment*:—If God had struck them with some leprosy in their forehead, as he did their aunt Miriam soon after, or with some palsy, or lingering consumption, the punishment had been grievous. But He, whose judgments are ever just, sometimes secret, saw fire the fittest revenge for a sin of fire; His own fire fittest to punish strange fire; a sudden judgment fit for a present and exemplary sin: He saw that if He had winked at this, His service had been exposed to profanation. It is wisdom in governors to take sin at the first bound, and so to revenge it that their punishment may be preventions. Speed of death is not always a judgment: suddenness as it is ever justly suspicious, so then certainly argues anger, when it finds us in an act of sin. Leisure of repentance is an argument of favour. When God gives a man law, it implies that He would not have judgment surprise him. (*Bp. Hall.*) *God's orders must be carried out*:—If the architect of a house had one plan, and the contractor had another, what conflicts would there be! How many walls would have to come down, how many doors and windows would need to be altered before the two could harmonise! Of the building of life God is the Architect, and man the contractor. It is for God to give the orders, and for us to carry them out. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *No strange fire permitted*:—There is only one way of obeying God, and that is by doing just as God tells us to do. Satan began the trial of improving on God's commandments in the Garden of Eden. Cain followed up the idea, and substituted the fruit of his own toil for the designated lamb, as a sinner's acceptable offering. Each of these attempts proved a curse as well as a failure; and so it will be to the end of time. The sons of Aaron were consecrated priests when they offered other fire on God's altar than that which God had commanded. Saul was the anointed king over the Lord's people when he offered sheep and oxen contrary to the command of God. Both priest and king were punished of God for their disobedience in failing to worship God in God's commanded way. God is the same God to-day as then. His commands concerning worship are as binding now as four thousand years ago—binding on theological professors, preachers, and Bible-class teachers. It is not enough to proffer an offering to God in worship, you must worship Him according to His commandments, or you must take the consequences of your disobedience. It is important, then, that you know what is God's law concerning His day, His house, His Word, His worship. Your eternal interests hang on your fidelity in little things as well as in great. (*H. C. Trumbull.*) *Reverence in holy things*:—Contrast with the conduct of Nadab and Abihu the reverence displayed by the

young King Edward of England. One of his companions, wishing to aid him in his efforts to grasp something just beyond his reach, placed a large Bible for him to step on. "No," said Edward, stooping to lift the volume, "I shall never tread on God's holy Word." Possibly there was a touch of superstition here; but was not the spirit commendable? What is sacred is to be held as sacred. The meanest thief is the one who runs off with a church-collection; for he adds sacrilege to his other crime. Show how we may in a very real sense offer strange fire. Is there not something of irreverence in the chipped coins and torn bills that find their way into the contribution-box? Custom may make us treat sacred things with levity. Luther tells us that he knew priests whose sacred office had become a mere form, and who, instead of repeating the proper formula in the consecration of the bread and wine, mumbled irreverently, "Bread thou art, and bread thou wilt remain;—wine thou art, and wine thou wilt remain." Has our church-going degenerated into a meaningless form? (*American Sunday School Times.*)

Ver. 3. Aaron held his peace.—*Aaron; or, the disturbing and tranquilising influences of life:*—I. THE DISTURBING INFLUENCES. Physical sufferings, secular anxieties, social grievances, moral remorse, heart bereavements. To the last of these Aaron was now the victim. 1. He has lost two sons. A double trial. 2. He had lost two sons after they had reached maturity. 3. After they had entered upon the most important and honourable office in life. What a disappointment! 4. In the most sudden way. 5. With no hope for their future blessedness. They were struck down by offended justice, without a moment for repentance. II. THE TRANQUILISING INFLUENCES OF HUMAN LIFE. "He held his peace." 1. There are three kinds of calming influences that are resorted to by men under trial—the carnal, the stoical, and the Christian. 2. The last of these is the only true tranquilising force. It contains at least four doctrines that tend to pacify the human spirit under the most trying circumstances of life. (1) That all who have implicit confidence in Christ as the Mediator are reconciled to God and delivered from condemnation. (2) That every disturbing event takes place under the superintendence of God. (3) That God has an absolute right to dispose of all things as He thinks fit. (4) That the most painful events to the good are short, and may be rendered sub-servient to their highest interest. They deepen the sense of our individuality by detaching us from society and making us in our sufferings feel our loneliness; they impress us with the unsatisfactoriness of all things pertaining to this material life. Southey has, with great poetic beauty, described how the calamities of life afflct the pious soul: they are only as clouds passing over the moon, making the queen of night appear more majestic in her march. (*Homilist.*) *Silence in affliction:*—I. EVEN A CHILD OF GOD MAY BE EXERCISED WITH SORE TRIALS AND AFFLICTIONS, THAT MAY LIE VERY HEAVY UPON HIM. (Psa. xxxviii. 2; Job ix. 17). And what wonder, if the children of God meet with trials upon earth, where they were never promised, nor could rationally expect their rest? What wonder, seeing they so often sin, and procure the evils under which they groan? All this is consistent with the love of a father, and our relation to him. II. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN BEING SILENT UNDER THE TRIALS GOD SEES FIT AT ANY TIME TO EXERCISE US WITH? 1. A deep sense of God's hand in what we suffer. This was the ground of David's silence: "I was dumb, and I opened not my mouth, because Thou didst it" (Psa. xxxix. 9). And Hezekiah, mourning, directs his eye to God and heaven. "What shall I say? He hath both spoken unto me, and Himself hath done it" (Isa. xxxviii. 15). 2. It includes a subscribing to God's justice in all His dealings with us, and that whatever He takes from us or lays upon us, we dare not to conclude the worse of Him in our thoughts or to open our mouths against Him. Thus being silent is opposed to self-justification, as being convinced that He hath punished us less than our iniquities deserve. 3. It includes a resigning ourselves to God, as having the most unquestionable dominion over us, and right to do with us and ours as seems good in His sight (Job iii. 12). 4. It includes resting in His pleasure, as that which is wisest and best; in opposition to murmuring and impatience, inward frets and discomposure of soul. III. WHAT CONSIDERATIONS MAY HELP TO WORK THE SOUL OF A CHILD OF GOD INTO SO DESIRABLE A FRAME, AS TO BE MUTE WHEN GOD'S AFFLICTING HAND MAY BE MOST PRESSING UPON HIM. The reasonableness of this frame may appear—1. From God's unquestionable right to dispose of us and ours as He pleases. When it is His will which is done upon us, His sovereignty should teach His creatures to be silent (Rom. ix. 21, 22). 2. It should teach us to be silent in whatever instance God afflicts; as it is He that

continues to us many other mercies, which have been all forfeited, and which might have been as justly removed as those He has taken away. 3. We ought to be silent under what God will have us suffer, as considering we have many ways sinned and offended against Him (Job xl. 4, 5). 4. We have reason to be silent, as considering that all God's dispensations, how afflictive soever, are conducted by unerring wisdom to His own glory. And if God be glorified, why should we be dissatisfied? 5. The people of God have reason to be silent under every affliction He brings upon them, considering He hath made with them an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure, which is sufficient to be all their salvation and is all their desire (2 Sam. xxiii. 5). Application: 1. To be impatient under affliction is unbecoming a child of God, considered as a new creature. 2. To oppose our wills to the will of God is high presumption, and both provoking to God, and dangerous to ourselves (Isa. xlv. 9). 3. It is contrary to our covenant engagements. When we yielded ourselves to God, did we not expressly agree that He should lead us to heaven, and that we would follow Him through what way He pleased to show us—through seas or wildernesses, or through any, even the roughest paths, so He brought us safe to the promised land. 4. Impatience under affliction is inconsistent with our own prayers. Submission to the will of God is, or ought to be, our daily request, and especially under such trials. 5. It would bring us under the charge of ingratitude to our best benefactor and friend. Has God heard my main prayer, and drawn me to Christ? Yet, if He lays His hand upon me in this or the other instance, shall I by my complaints drown all the remembrance of His former loving-kindness and grace? Moreover, what a slight should we put on the remaining everlasting rest, should we repine at present sufferings, which are so soon to issue in endless joy! (*D. Wilcox*). *Silence under affliction*:—I. WHAT

IT IS FOR THE AFFLICTED AND BEREAVED TO HOLD THEIR PEACE UNDER THE CORRECTING HAND OF GOD. 1. It certainly implies, in the first place, that the afflicted and bereaved should not complain of the Divine conduct towards them. They have no ground to complain, because God takes nothing from them but what He has given them, and inflicts no more upon them than they deserve and He has a right to inflict. 2. For the afflicted to hold their peace implies that they not only cease to complain, but that they cease to think hard of God. It is much easier to suppress their verbal complaints than to suppress all their inward repinings under the correcting hand of God. 3. The only way in which the afflicted and bereaved can get rid of their inward murmuring thoughts is cordially to approve of the conduct of God in causing them to suffer their present afflictions and bereavements. Nothing can remove hatred of God but love to God. Nothing can remove opposition to God but submission to God. II. WHY THE AFFLICTED AND BEREAVED OUGHT TO HOLD THEIR PEACE AND SILENTLY SUBMIT TO THE CORRECTING HAND OF GOD. This is their duty.—1. Because they always deserve the bereavements which they are called to suffer. They are under the same obligations to submit silently and unreservedly under the frowns of God as to rejoice under His smiles. 2. The afflicted and bereaved ought to hold their peace and silently submit to the correcting hand of God because He has a right to afflict and bereave them whenever He sees it necessary to do it. 3. It becomes the afflicted and bereaved to bow in silence to the sovereign will of God because He always afflicts and bereaves them at the proper time. It is well that God does not allow men to choose when He shall afflict them. He always knows the best time, and when He does afflict them they must know that He sees good reasons to afflict them at that time rather than any other. And since He sees good reasons for afflicting them at such a particular time they have no ground to complain but ought silently to submit to His unerring wisdom, whether they are high or low, or whether they are young or old. 4. That men ought to hold their peace under the afflicting hand of God because He always afflicts them in the best way as well as at the best time. Improvement: 1. It appears from the nature of silent submission under Divine corrections, that it must be highly pleasing to God. It is the very spirit which He requires them to feel and express while He lays His chastising hand upon them. He says to them, "Be still, and know that I am God." 2. It appears from the nature of sincere submission under trials and afflictions that insubmission is extremely criminal. When either saints or sinners complain under Divine corrections they practically say that He who has made them shall not reign over them. Can there be anything more displeasing to God? 3. It appears from the nature of true submission under afflictions that it is something different from stupidity. Stupidity consists in despising the chastenings of the Lord. Mankind are far more apt to be stupid

than to be faint under afflictions and bereavements. They try to overlook the hand of God in them, and to consider them as mere accidents, or necessary evils, which could not be avoided and must be borne. Such stupidity under Divine corrections in the sinners in Zion God severely condemned. If afflictions do not remove stupidity they increase it; if they do not soften the heart they harden it; and if they do not produce submission they create obstinacy. But the afflicted are extremely apt to misconstrue the effect of their afflictions and to mistake stupidity for submission, and imagine that they feel resigned when they only feel stupid and insensible. 4. True submission is diametrically opposite to stupidity and is perfectly consistent with the keenest sensibility under the correcting hand of God. It becomes the bereaved to view their bereavements, as far as possible, in all their painful effects and consequences, that they may exercise a deep and unlimited submission to the Divine corrections. Though Aaron held his peace and refrained from speaking, yet he did not refrain from thinking. His mind was undoubtedly awake, and all his powers and faculties in vigorous exercise. There is much more danger of feeling too little than of feeling too much under Divine chastisements. 5. If the afflicted and bereaved ought to hold their peace under the chastising hand of God, then they ought to submit to the heaviest as well as to the lightest chastisements. 6. It appears from the nature of submission that it is easy for the afflicted and bereaved to determine whether they do or do not sincerely submit to the correcting hand of God. There is no medium between approving or disapproving His conduct in afflicting them. (*N. Emmons, D.D.*) *The silence of Aaron*:—An ancient philosopher has said, "Light sorrows speak; great sorrows are silent." The experience of the human heart, and of this life, where affliction has so many degrees and arrays itself in so many different shades, justifies this observation. The sacred poets of Israel, in this thought, had anticipated pagan wisdom (see Isa. xlvii. 5; Lam. ii. 12, 13). 1. The impressions and the conduct of Aaron cannot be usefully estimated without a knowledge of the event. 2. It is a test of humility to be silent in the bosom of an irreparable loss, of a profound affliction. 3. In the mute sorrow of Aaron, there is more than this wise humility; we must see there also acquiescence. 4. Lastly, it is just to recognise in the conduct of Aaron lowly and firm resignation. (*A. Coquerel.*) *Aaron's silence in presence of God's judgment*:—Doubtless Aaron looked somewhat heavily on this sad spectacle: it could not but appal him to see his two sons dead before him—dead in displeasure, dead suddenly, dead by the immediate hand of God. And now he could repent him of his new honour to see it succeed so ill with the sons of his loins; neither could he choose but see himself stricken in them. But his brother Moses, that had learned not to know either nephews or brother when they stood in his way to God, wisely turned his eyes from the dead carcases of his sons to his respect of the living God. My brother, this event is fearful, but just; these were thy sons, but they sinned; it was not for God, it is not for thee, to look so much who they were, as what they did. If they have profaned God and themselves, can thy natural affection so miscarry thee that thou couldst wish their impunity with the blemish of thy Maker? Show now whether thou more lovest God or thy sons. Show whether thou be a better father or a son. Aaron, weighing these things, holds his peace, not out of an amazement or sullenness, but out of patient and humble submission; and seeing God's pleasure, and their desert, is content to forget that he had sons. He might have had a silent tongue, and a clamorous heart. There is no voice louder in the ears of God, than a speechless repining of the soul. There is no greater proof of grace, than to smart patiently, and humbly and contentedly to rest the heart in the justice and wisdom of God's proceeding. (*Bp. Hall.*) *Divine judgment and domestic ties*:—Serious people sometimes wonder how it shall be at the last day—how godly parents shall be able to bear the sight of their Christless children given over to everlasting death; whether the knowledge or sight of near and beloved relatives in perdition will not interrupt and destroy the peace of heaven. But, if such persons would reason upon the subject from a standpoint higher than the mere sympathies of nature, they would have less trouble concerning it. Aaron looking upon his slain sons, is a picture of how it shall be. When God's ultimate judgments shall go into effect, their justice shall be so conspicuous, and the goodness and glory of God in them shall be so luminous and manifest, that it will not be in the power of any ransomed soul to think of demurring, or indulging one tearful regret. When we come to see things in the light of heaven, every enemy of God will appear so essentially an enemy to ourselves and our peace, that, however otherwise related to us, we will be glad to see them shut up in the

dreadful prison-house for ever and for ever. What are domestic ties and sympathies in comparison with the glorious will of our blessed Lord? Jesus says, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me." Every saint is fully wrapped up in the righteousness, wisdom, and goodness of his Lord. Everything that God does carries the heart of the ransomed ones so completely with it, and so overwhelms and swallows up all other affections, that they are as utter nothing. Nadab and Abihu may die for ever under Aaron's very eyes, and yet God's honour and glory in it leave him not a tear to shed, and not a word of lamentation to utter. (*J. A. Sciss, D.D.*) *The silence of Aaron's sorrow*:—I. THE POIGNANT CHARACTER OF AARON'S SORROW. The blow came and smote—1. His patriotism—he would feel that Israel as a nation was disgraced. 2. His piety—religion was dishonoured and God insulted. 3. His paternity. (1) It is a great grief for parents to watch their children die when they have seen the end approaching, but in Aaron's case the bereavement was sudden. (2) It is a great grief for parents to surrender their children even when they feel sure they die in the Lord, but, in Aaron's case, his sons died under the frown of the Lord, and concerning their future he could have no sure and certain hope. To lose two sons under such circumstances was sorrow of the most poignant kind. II. THE PATIENT CONDUCT OF AARON UNDER SUCH SORROW. (*F. W. Brown.*) *God glorified before the people*:—If I so hold a mirror that I cause it to reflect on your dazzled vision the brilliant rays of the sun, that mirror adds nothing to the lustre of the grand orb of day; it only directs the light towards you. If I write to you in most glowing and graphic terms concerning my bosom friend, I do not thereby increase his well-known talents and virtues. I simply beget in your mind, or foster, feelings of admiration, respect or love. So when you and I praise God, we do not, we cannot, augment His essential glory. It is impossible for us finite and dependent creatures to add anything to the infinite love, wisdom, and power of the Divine One. But we can elevate Him in our own estimation, increase our own comfort, stimulate our own spiritual life, and intensify the affection which others entertain for Him. (*J. H. Hitchen, D.D.*) *The stillness of intense emotion*:—As I have felt a tear drop from a cloudless sky, and wondered whence it could come, so have I seen a fair countenance full of openness, serenity, and majesty, and the large still tear standing in the eye. Yet no single muscle was distorted; it seemed to me like the stillness of intense emotion, like the sorrow of goodness, like a broken heart at peace with its own woe; as though one, whose hopes of earthly bliss had all vanished, were comforted from within by the presence and assurance of Holy Love, saying, "It is well, peace be unto thee." (*John Pulsford, D.D.*) *The broken heart is like a broken harp*:—The broken heart is like a broken harp. The harp is either absolutely silent, or sends forth discordant sounds. Human grief is so deep that it is either speechless or gives expression to bitter complaints and hard thoughts. Whatever human ministries may accomplish by way of modifying it, they do not heal. Here is the superiority of Christ Jesus in His treatment. He "heals" the broken-hearted. *Service for God not to be interrupted by adversity*:—A certain heathen making an oration, as he was sacrificing to his god, in the midst of his devotion, word was brought him that his only son was dead: whereat being nothing at all moved, he made this answer, "I did not get him to live for ever;" and so went on with his business. Thus when we are entering into the sight of God's favour, it may so please Him to try us by afflictions; there may news come of a ship wrecked at sea, of a chapman broke in the country, of the death of friends and allies, &c. Yet ought we not for all this to leave off our course in the service of Him, but rather whatsoever comes cross, make it as it were a parenthesis, an ornament, not a hindrance, in our progress to heaven. (*J. Spencer.*) *Undisturbed service*:—Valerius Maximus tells a story of a young nobleman, that attended upon Alexander, while he was sacrificing; this nobleman held his censor for incense, and in the holding of it, there fell a coal of fire upon his flesh, and burned it so as the very scent of it was in the nostrils of all that were about him; and because he would not disturb Alexander in his service, he resolutely did not stir to put off the fire from him, but held still the censor. If heathens made such ado, in sacrificing to their idol gods, that they would mind it so as no disturbance must be made, whatsoever they endured: what care should we then have of ourselves, when we come to worship the High God? Oh that we could mind the duties of God's worship, as matters of high concernment, as things of greatest consequence, that so we might learn to sanctify the name of our God in the performance of duty more than ever we have done. (*Ibid.*) *Over-tenderness to the*

criminal:—Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes. There is such a thing as sinning through over-tenderness of feeling; and unless we are on the watch just here, we shall fail of being both just and merciful in our sympathies and in our conduct. When a great crime is committed, it is not a wise exhibit of tender feelings to dwell upon the peculiar temptations, and the peculiar weaknesses, and the unfortunate early disadvantages of the brutal criminal, to a forgetfulness of the sufferings of his innocent victims, and of the wretchedness which his crime has brought into one home and another. It is not that we are to take vengeance into our own hands; but that we are to refrain from mourning over the execution of justice. It is a sinful as well as a sickly sentimentalism which gives its tears to the criminal class in the community, instead of to those who are wronged through crime. The prevalence of this sentimentalism is one of the stimulating causes of crime. There is need of the re-echoing of the words of God to His people over the displays of His justice, "Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes" [in mourning over the evil-doers] "but let . . . the whole house of Israel bewail the burning which the Lord hath kindled." Let the crime be mourned over, but not the criminal—as a criminal. (*H. C. Trumbull*.) "*For the anointing oil of the Lord is upon you*":—That oil must separate between you and the appearance of unbelief; that oil is a restraint as well as an inspiration. Is it not so now, varying the terms and the relations of things? If we could enter into the spirit of that restriction, what different men we should be! The name of your country is upon you: dishonour it not. A venerable name, never associated with meanness, cowardice, corruption, or fear of man. Rise to the dignity of the signature which is upon you. When you flee, the enemy will say your country has fled; when you play the coward, the enemy will say the throne has tottered and the sovereign has succumbed. The holy vow is upon you. You said you would be better and do better. You punctuated the vow with hot tears; your emphasis was quite an unfamiliar tone, so much so that we wondered at the poignancy of your utterance, and felt in very deed that you were speaking the heart's truth. Remember that vow. The vow of the Lord is upon you. If you stoop, it will not be condescension, it will be base prostration; if you palter with the reality of language, it will not be ability in the use of words, it will be the profanation of the medium which God has established for the conveyance and the interchange of truth. The exalted position is yours. You are the head of a family: if you go wrong, the whole family will suffer to the second and third and fourth generations. You are known and trusted in business: if you be found mean, untrustworthy, faithless, deceitful, the whole city will feel the anguish of a pang, for you were regarded as a trustee of its honour and its reputation. The anointing oil is upon you in some form or in some way. The name of Christ is upon us all. We cannot get rid of it. In this way or in that we have all to do with Christ, with His name, His honour, His cross, His crown. (*J. Parker, D.D.*)

Vers. 9-11. *Do not drink wine.*—*Help to temperance*:—Combine with this verse Jer. xxxv. 6; Ephes. v. 18; 1 Thess. v. 7. Intemperance, one of the giant evils of the land, is self-imposed. This is its saddest feature. All the evils connected with it might be swept away if men so willed. I. THE NATURAL. Use no intoxicants; and thus never acquire a passion for them. II. THE MEDICAL. Some treat drunkenness as a disease; and by medicine seek to destroy the appetite for alcohol. III. THE SANITARY. Asylums for inebriates have been opened, which combine physical and moral means to effect a cure; and with success. IV. THE LEGAL. Its object is to control or arrest the evil; and by prohibition of its manufacture and sale, to remove it from the land. V. THE VOLUNTARY. This involves the pledge and membership in societies banded together for mutual help and safety. Earnest work for others is a good preventative, so long as it is actively continued. VI. THE SPIRITUAL. Grace, wherever received, casts out the demon of drink. VII. THE PHILANTHROPIC. Here is a reform in which to engage. The beneficent change in public sentiment demands devout thankfulness, and is prophetic of what shall be achieved. (*Lewis O. Thompson*.) *Abstinence recommended*:—It is one of the attractions of a glass of wine to those who like it, that it gives a different colour to everything the drinker looks at, just as soon as it has any effect at all. If there were no effect from wine-drinking, there would be no temptation to drink wine. But so soon as the wine takes hold of the brain, the brain takes hold with a new grip of everything it thinks of. Memory is keener, anticipation is brighter, and the present is a great deal livelier. Everybody in

sight or in thought looks brighter, too. This isn't so bad a world as it seemed an hour ago! "When the wine is in, the wit is out." What does a man under the influence of champagne know of sharp distinctions in morals, or in social life, or in logic? The inspired teacher was never more clearly inspired than when that teacher wrote, "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes strong drink; lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted." And it was God Himself who insisted that priests should let wine and strong drink alone, lest they should fail to know the difference between holy and unholy, clean and unclean, and lest they should be unable to teach the truth aright. If you want to know what is right, and to do what is right, and to be able to teach others to know and do right, do you let wine and strong drink alone—before you go to church, and after you come back from church. What is good enough for a king, and safe enough for a priest, can wisely be your choice wherever you are. (*H. C. Trumbull.*)

Excitement to be avoided by ministers:—The effect of wine is to excite nature, and all natural excitement hinders that calm, well-balanced condition of soul which is essential to the proper discharge of the priestly office. The things which excite mere nature are manifold indeed—wealth, ambition, politics, the various objects of emulation around us in the world. All these things act, with exciting power, upon nature, and entirely unfit us for every department of priestly service. If the heart be swollen with feelings of pride, covetousness, or emulation, it is utterly impossible that the pure air of the sanctuary can be enjoyed, or the sacred functions of priestly ministry discharged. If we are not keeping our priestly garments unspotted, and if we are not keeping ourselves free from all that would excite nature, we shall, assuredly, break down. The priest must keep his heart with all diligence, else the Levite will fail, and the warrior will be defeated. It is, let me repeat it, the business of each one to be fully aware of what it is that to him proves to be "wine and strong drink"—what it is that produces excitement—that blunts his spiritual perception, or dims his priestly vision. It may be an auction-mart, a cattle-show, a newspaper. It may be the merest trifle. But no matter what it is, if it tends to excite, it will disqualify us for priestly ministry; and if we are disqualified as priests, we are unfit for everything, inasmuch as our success in every department and in every sphere must ever depend upon our cultivating a spirit of worship. (*C. H. Mackintosh.*)

Testimony of a clergyman as to the value of total abstinence:—The Rev. S. Hooke, vicar of Clopton, Woodbridge, offers the following testimony:—"As there are so many of my clerical brethren who are doubtful if they could carry on their arduous labours if they abstained from alcoholic drinks, I write my experience of the last seven years, during which time I have been an abstainer. I believe I can do treble the amount of work without the use of these drinks than with them. At first I doubted if I could, and it was with trembling hand that I signed the pledge of the C.E.T.S. But I thank God from the depth of my heart that I took that step, for I am certain that I have been able to do more real good by my advocacy of total abstinence than I did before. On looking through my diary of last year I find I have preached a hundred and seventy-five times, given forty-four temperance lectures, ninety-five gospel addresses and cottage lectures, besides travelling nearly four thousand miles. Included in the above are the sermons and addresses I delivered at two Church Missions of ten days each. I am thankful to say I enjoy robust health, which I am confident is the result, in part, at least, of total abstinence. I am sure the happiness and joy of doing good to our fallen brothers and sisters more than compensates for the loss of a trifling gratification."

The value of abstinence:—It was Dr. Hook's boast that for more than thirty years he had "laboured in the manufacturing districts, not for the working classes, but with them, in the measures desired by themselves for the improvement of their class, and having for their object the formation of habits of temperance and prudence; and especially that he had worked with them in the cause of rational recreation and education." It was with a view to aid this wide and general step in the education of the masses that, late in life, he joined the temperance movement, and became a pledged teetotaler. He used to tell the story of his change in this direction in the following way:—"I had in my parish at Leeds a man who earned 18s. a week; out of this he used to give 7s. to his wife, and to spend the rest in drink; but for all that, he was a good sort of man. I went to him and said, 'Now, suppose you abstain altogether for six months.' 'Well, if I do, will you, sir?' was his reply. 'Yes,' I said, 'I will.' 'What,' said he, 'from beer, from spirits, and from wine?' 'Yes. And how shall I know if you keep your promise?' 'Why,

sir, you ask my "missus," and I'll ask yourn.' It was agreed between us for six months at first, and afterwards we renewed the promise. He never resumed the bad habit that he had left off; and he is now a prosperous and happy man in business at St. Petersburg, and I am Dean of Chichester." *Total abstinence a safeguard in responsible positions*.—On almost all boilers connected with engines there can be found a safety-valve. Whenever the boiler gets too full of steam and is in danger of bursting, this little valve opens and lets the steam out. No one has to watch it, for it opens of itself. There was once a man who wanted to travel on a certain steamboat. He went to the boat and examined the machinery, but he found that there was not an efficient safety-valve on the boiler, so he said to the captain, "I won't go on your boat, captain. You haven't a proper safety-valve, and I am afraid the boat may be blown up without it." "Come down with me to the engine-room," said the captain, "and I will show you the best safety-valve in the world." When they reached the engine-room the captain went up to the engineer, and laying his hand on his shoulder, said, "There, sir, is my safety-valve, the best to be found anywhere—a man who never drinks anything but cold water." "You are right, captain; I want no better safety-valve than that. I will go on this boat." He knew that the engineer would always watch the machinery, and if anything went wrong he would know it instantly. Only a sober man ought to be trusted in such a responsible position; and when boats have such engineers they have the best safety-valves in the world.

Vers. 16-20. Wherefore have ye not eaten the sin offering?—*Consideration for neglected duty*.—Part of this goat being a sin offering, should have been eaten—I mean the shoulder and breast allotted to the priest—but it was all burned contrary to the law, for which Moses was justly offended, having seen so lately God's wrath upon the other fault. The answer of Aaron you have in verse 19, in effect and sense as if he should have said, "I confess and acknowledge the ordinance of God is to be kept, and we are to eat with joy of the parts allotted unto us of the sacrifice for sin; the blood was not brought into the Tabernacle of the testimony. But how could I eat with joy in so heavy and woful a case of my children? Compelled, therefore, with the greatness of my grief, I did what I did," &c. At which answer, saith our chapter, Moses was content, so bearing with his infirmity, considering his great sorrow, but not leaving an example to forgive them that maliciously transgress the commandment of God. And as Moses is said to have stayed his anger, so you see the Lord Himself did, not punishing again this fault. It layeth open unto us the great kindness of our gracious God, of whom the psalm saith, "He is full of compassion and mercy, long suffering and of great goodness. He will not always be chiding, neither keepeth He His anger for ever. He dealeth not with us after our sins, neither rewardeth us according to our wickedness," &c. Secondly, you may see here how these ceremonial laws gave place to necessity, as David also in necessity did eat the shewbread, which was otherwise unlawful for him to do; and Hezekiah admitted to the Passover those that were not cleansed. But for moral laws there is no dispensation for corporal necessity, but a constant course must be held in obeying them. For it is not necessary that I should live; but it is ever necessary that I should live righteously. Lastly, in that Moses admitted a reasonable excuse, we may learn to abhor pride and to do the like; pride, I say, which scorneth to hear what may be said against the conceit we have once harboured. A modest man or woman doth not thus; but even for his servant or his maid holy Job had an ear, and did not despise their judgment, their complaint, or grief, when they thought themselves evil entreated by him. The example of God Himself is instead of a thousand, who both heard and accepted of Abimelech his excuse for taking away Abraham's wife, "I know," saith He, "that thou didst it even with an upright mind, and therefore I kept thee also that thou shouldst not sin against Me," &c. Shall the Lord be thus sweet, and we so dogged, so churlish, so stern and sour, that no excuse may serve for a thing done amiss if once we have taken notice of it? Beware, beware, and remember your own frailty well. A stubborn frowardness hath hurt many, sweet gentleness and courtesy never any; but though wicked men were unthankful, yet our gracious God was pleased. (*Ep. Babington.*) Such things have befallen me.—*The afflictions which befall the servants of God*.—I. THAT SORE AFFLICTIONS SOMETIMES BEFALL THE SERVANTS OF GOD. 1. The death of two sons by one stroke. 2. The distressing character of their death. 3. The prohibition of any expression of grief. II. THAT UNDER THE PRESSURE OF SORE AFFLICTIONS THE SERVANTS OF GOD ARE REQUIRED TO ATTEND TO

RELIGIOUS DUTIES. 1. The obligatoriness of such duties is not annulled by trial. Trust in God, and prayer and praise to him, are binding in sickness as in health, in sorrow as in joy. So are all religious duties. 2. The need of the help which attention to such duties affords is not diminished by trial, but rather increased.

III. THAT UNDER THE PRESSURE OF SORE AFFLICTIONS THE MIND AND HEART OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD OFTEN SEEM UNEQUAL TO A PROPER DISCHARGE OF RELIGIOUS DUTIES. On the day when this calamity befell them, Aaron and his surviving sons did not accurately discharge their sacred duties. It was expressly commanded that the flesh of those sin offerings, the blood of which was not carried into the Tabernacle of the congregation, should be eaten by the officiating priests (chap. vi. 24-30). Instead of doing this, Aaron and his sons burnt the flesh of the sin-offering (vers. 16-18). The error may be viewed as—1. An oversight caused by the things which had befallen them. In great griefs the heart seems dead to every feeling but the predominant one, and the mind seems incapable of sustained attention to anything except what is related to its griefs. Meditation upon the holy Scriptures, prayer, spiritual aspirations, communion with God—these seem impossible to the sorrow-stricken soul. Needing them so urgently, yet the soul seems unable properly to attend to them. 2. Intentional because of felt unfitness to eat of the “most holy” flesh. This seems to receive most support from the words following the text: “Such things have befallen me, and if I had eaten the sin-offering to-day, should it have been accepted in the sight of the Lord?” The bereaved father seems to have been not only sorrowful, but deeply awed and humbled by the things which had befallen him, and to have felt that if he had eaten the “most holy” flesh in such a frame of mind it would not have been acceptable to God. His case reminds us of some who absent themselves from the sacrament of the Lord’s supper because of a sincere feeling of unworthiness. But let such persons remember that Aaron’s sense of unworthiness did not disqualify him for eating the flesh of the sin-offering; he rather erred in not doing so.

IV. THAT WHEN THE MIND AND HEART OF THE SUFFERING SERVANTS OF GOD SEEM THUS UNFITTED FOR RELIGIOUS DUTIES, GOD DOES NOT ACCOUNT SUCH UNFITNESS AS SIN. When Moses heard the apology of Aaron “he was content”; and we are warranted in regarding his “content” as an evidence that God also was satisfied with the reason assigned by the high priest for his deviation from the line of duty. Surely the Lord knew the intense anguish which His servant was suffering, and regarded him with deepest, tenderest pity. “The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.” Here is consolation for the sorrow-stricken soul. If in the day of your sore afflictions you seem to have no heart for worship, your efforts to pray end in what seems to you to be utter failure, and religious thought and emotion seem to have entirely departed from you, remember the touching words of Aaron in his great calamity, “Such things have befallen me”; remember also those other words, “And when Moses heard that, he was content.” (*W. Jones.*) *The vicissitudes of life*:—Observe here again with yourself the strange and admirable change of these worldly matters in the turn, as we say, of a hand. For but yesterday, as it were, Aaron and these sons of his had a famous and glorious consecration into the greatest and highest dignity upon earth, nothing under the sun being more glorious than that priesthood in those days. And how may you think his heart rejoiced to see, not only himself, but his children (which parents often love more than themselves), so blessed and honoured? But, O change! how sudden and fearful! O fickle, fading comfort, that man taketh hold of in this world, whatsoever it be, if worldly! These sons so lately exalted and honoured to their old father’s sweet and great joy, now lie destroyed before his face, to his extreme and twitching torment. And how? Not by any ordinary and accustomed death, but by fire from heaven, a sore and dreadful judgment. For what also? Even for breach of commanded duty by the Lord, all which doubled and trebled the father’s sorrow. As it did in David when his son Absalom died not a usual death, and in rebellion and disobedience against his king and father. You remember his passion then uttered: “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom; would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son.” He considered the cause wherein he died, and the manner how he died; to a father so kind as David was, both of them full of woe and sorrow. Let never, therefore, any prosperity in this world puff us; for we little know what to-morrow may bring with it. The glass that glittereth most is soonest broken; the rankest corn is soonest laid; and the fullest bough with pleasant fruit is soonest slit, having more eyes upon it, and more stones cast at it, than all the other boughs of the tree. Pleasant wine maketh wise men fools,

and fools often stark mad. Milo's strong arm overthrew him, and Cæsar his ambition. The one trusted too much to nature, and the other to fortune. As a spider's web, so is a man's greatness in this world soon wiped away with a little whisk. (*Ep. Babington.*) When Moses heard that, he was content.—*A contented law*:—Some explanations carry their own conviction. We know the voice of honesty when we hear it; there is a frankness about it that can hardly be mistaken. But the meaning lies deeper; there can be no contentment in the presence of violated law. Where a law is violated wantonly, nature can have no rest; she says, "I cannot sleep to-night." Thank God she cannot! When she can forget her Maker, the end will have come in darkness, and there will in very deed, in spirit and effect, be no more any God. Law must be satisfied in one of two ways. Law can rest upon the ashes of Sodom and Gomorrah, saying, "Judgment has been inflicted, righteousness has been vindicated, and the seal of condemnation has been attached to the testimony of evil"; and mighty, imperial, inexorable law sits on the desolated cities—"content." That is not the way in which the Lord would bring about His own contentment; still, there is the law: fall upon this stone and be broken, or the stone will fall upon you and you will be ground to powder. The gospel is a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death. God would have law obeyed: all His ordinances carried out in simple obedience, every statute turned into conduct, every appointment represented in obedience and praise. Then the universe, faithful to her Creator, the stars never disloyal to their Creator-King—the whole creation will say—"Content." (*J. Parker, D.D.*)

CHAPTER XI.

VERS. 2-47. These are the beasts which ye shall eat.—The clean and the unclean:—The Mosaic Law attached great importance to meats and drinks: the Christian religion attaches none. The Apostle Peter was shown, by the vision of a sheet let down from heaven, not only that all nations were now to receive the gospel message, but that all kinds of food were now clean, and that all the prohibitions which had formerly been laid upon them for legal purposes were now once for all withdrawn. A Christian may, if he pleases, put himself under restrictions as to these matters. You will remember that the Apostle Paul says, "I know and am persuaded of the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean." The doctrine of the New Testament is expressly laid down, "Every creature of God is good and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving." And as for the practice enjoined upon believers, "All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient." The Levitical law enjoined many precepts as to meats and drinks; but those carnal ordinances were imposed until the time of reformation. 1. It is our firm belief that these distinctions of meats were laid down on purpose to KEEP THE JEWS AS A DISTINCT PEOPLE, and that herein they might be a type of the people of God, who are also, throughout all ages, to be a separate people—not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world. 1. But you will ask of me in what respects are you to be distinguished? In a pure consistency always, in a vain eccentricity never. Not by any peculiarity in garments or language are you to be known. Heavenly realities within do not always need to be labelled outside, so that everybody may recognise you and say, "There goes a saint." There are other modes of being distinguished from the world than any of these. 2. We ought ever to be distinguished from the world in the great object of our life. As for worldly men, some of them are seeking wealth, others of them fame; some seek after comfort, others after pleasure. Subordinately you may seek after any of these, but your principal motive as a Christian should always be to live for Christ. 3. By your spirit, as well as your aim, you should likewise be distinguished. The spirit of this world is often selfish; it is always a spirit that forgets God, that ignores the existence of a Creator in His own world. Now, your spirit should be one of unselfish devotion, a spirit always conscious of His presence, bowed down with the weight, or raised up with the cheer of Hagar's exclamation, "Thou God seest me": a spirit which watcheth humbly before God, and seeketh to know His will and to do it through the grace of God given to you. 4. Your maxims, too, and the rules which regulate you, should be

very different from those of others. The believer reads things, not in man's light, in the obscurity of which so many blind bats are willing to fly, but he reads things in the sunlight of heaven. If a thing be right, though he lose by it, it is done; if it be wrong, though he should become as rich as Cæsar by allowing it, he scorns the sin for his Master's sake. 5. The Christian should be separate in his actions. I would not give much for your religion unless it can be seen. I know some people's religion is heard of, but give me the man whose religion is seen. 6. A Christian is distinguished by his conversation. He will often trim a sentence where others would have made it far more luxuriant by a jest which was not altogether clean. Following Herbert's advice, "He pares his apple—he would cleanly feed." If he would have a jest, he picks the mirth, but leaves the sin; his conversation is not used to levity, but it ministereth grace unto the hearers. How shall I urge you to give more earnest heed to this holy separation? If we do not see to this matter we shall bring sorrow on our own souls; we shall lose all hope of honouring Christ, and we shall sooner or later bring a great disaster on the world. II. The distinction drawn between clean and unclean animals was, we think, intended by God to KEEP HIS PEOPLE ALWAYS CONSCIOUS THAT THEY WERE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF SIN. It is all the prayer that is wanted—"Lord, show me myself; Lord, show me Thyself; reveal sin and reveal a Saviour." III. It was also intended to be a RULE OF DISCRIMINATION BY WHICH WE MAY JUDGE WHO ARE CLEAN AND WHO ARE UNCLEAN—that is, WHO ARE SAINTS AND WHO ARE NOT. There are two tests, but they must both be united. The beast that was clean was to chew the cud: here is the inner life; every true-hearted man must know how to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the sacred Word. The man who does not feed upon gospel truth, and so feed upon it, too, that he knows the sweetness and relish of it, and seeks out its marrow and fatness, that man is no heir of heaven. You must know a Christian by his inwards, by that which supports his life and sustains his frame. But then the clean creatures were also known by their walk. The Jew at once discovered the unclean animal by its having an undivided hoof; but if the hoof was thoroughly divided, then it was clean, provided that it also chewed the cud. So there must be in the true Christian a peculiar walk such as God requires. You cannot tell a man by either of these tests alone; you must have them both. But while you use them upon others, apply them to yourselves. What do you feed on? What is your habit of life? Do you chew the cud by meditation? When your soul feeds on the flesh and blood of Christ have you learned that His flesh is meat indeed, and that His blood is drink indeed? If so, it is well. What about your life? Are your conversation and your daily walk according to the description which is given in the Word of believers in Christ? If not, the first test will not stand alone. You may profess the faith within, but if you do not walk aright without, you belong to the unclean. On the other hand, you may walk aright without, but unless there is the chewing of the cud within, unless there is a real feeding upon precious truth in the heart, all the right walking in the world will not prove you to be a Christian. That holiness which is only outward is moral, not spiritual; it does not save the soul. That religion, on the other hand, which is only inward is but fancy; it cannot save the soul either. But the two together—the inward parts made capable of knowing the lusciousness, the sweetness, the fatness of Christ's truth, and the outward parts conformed to Christ's image and character—these conjoined point out the true and clean Christian with whom it is blessed to associate here, and for whom a better portion is prepared hereafter. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

The clean and unclean:—Great surprise and wonder have been expressed by some learned men at the profound acquaintance with the animal kingdom exhibited in this chapter. Our greatest men of modern science have penetrated no deeper into natural history than the author of these laws. Leibnitz, and Buffon, and Cuvier, and Erxleben, and Humboldt, have been unable to make any material advances upon the classifications and distinctions, in the nature, habits, and qualities of animals, here given long before mere human science in these departments was born. And those may well wonder who allow no higher wisdom in these laws than that of mere man. The fact is, that these Mosaic institutes all have upon them such distinct traces of the hand and mind of God, that it becomes the height of folly to refer them to the mere ingenuity of man. I find in this chapter a SYSTEM OF WHOLESOME DIETETICS. All the animals here pronounced clean are the most valuable, nutritious, and wholesome of creatures for human food. It does not follow that none among those forbidden are good for food; but I wish to say that it is certain all the animals here called "clean" are the best. II. A second, and somewhat more direct aim of these

arrangements, LOOKED TO THE KEEPING OF THE HEBREWS ENTIRELY DISTINCT FROM ALL OTHER PEOPLE. They were to be the light and truth-bearing nation among the families of man. They were elected to perpetuate a knowledge of the true God, and, by their peculiar training, to prepare the way for Christ and Christianity. To fulfil this mission they needed to be strongly fenced in and barricaded against the subtle inroads of idolatry. And it was, in part, to effect this segregation of the Jewish people that this system of religious dietetics was instituted. Nothing more effectual could be desired to keep one people distinct from another. It causes the difference between them to be ever present to the mind, touching, as it does, at so many points of social and every-day contact; and it is therefore far more powerful in its results, as a rule of distinction, than any difference in doctrine, worship, or morals, which men could entertain. Kitto says that when in Asia he had almost daily occasion to be convinced of the incalculable efficacy of such distinctions in keeping men apart from strangers. A Mahomedan, for instance, might be kind, liberal, indulgent; but the recurrence of a meal, or any eating, threw him back upon his own distinctive practices and habits, reminding him that you were an unclean person, and that his own purity was endangered by contact with you. III. A still further and more direct intent of these religious dietetics was TO TRAIN THE UNDERSTANDING TO THE PERCEPTION OF MORAL DISTINCTIONS—to engrave upon the mind an idea of holiness. Indeed, this was one of the leading objects of the entire ceremonial law. There are islands in the sea which would not exist but for the coral reefs upon which they rest; and so there would be no Christianity without these ceremonial regulations, which, by small beginnings, laid in the human mind the foundations upon which all our Christian convictions have been wrought out. Geologists tell us that the physical world is composed of various layers, one on the other, from a deep granite base up to the fertile mould which furnishes us food while we live and graves when we are dead. It is much the same in the moral and religious world. It has been brought forth by degrees. As there have been many geologic eras, so there have been various religious dispensations, each one furnishing the basis for the next succeeding. Each of these successive dispensations furnished a distinct stratum upon which the following one was built. The last could not exist without the first. Each one is a part of the grand whole. Connecting this chapter with the laws concerning offerings and priests, we can easily see how the whole would operate in begetting and establishing the idea of purity and holiness. Dividing off all animated nature into clean and unclean, some would be regarded as better and purer than others. Of this pure kind only could be taken for sacrifices. And even of the better kind only the purest and most spotless individuals were to be selected. The sacrificial victim would hence appear very widely separated from the common herd of living creatures, and very clean and good. A thoroughly cleansed and consecrated officer was then to take it in charge, and wash both it and himself before it could come upon the altar. And when the presentation was to be made to the Lord in the most Holy Place, only the pure blood, in a golden and consecrated bowl, could be brought, and even that with great fear and trembling. Thus, from the clean beast, and the cleaner priest, and the still further cleansing of both, and the most Holy Place, which could be approached only by so holy a personage with such sacred circumspection, the worshipper was taught the idea of holiness, the intense purity of his God, and the necessity of holiness in order to come into His favour. The fact is, that the religious world has derived its idea of moral purity from the Mosaic rights. It was part of their great office to teach mankind moral distinctions, and to open the human understanding and conscience to the idea of sanctity. IV. Connected with this, then, was the still further intent of these laws to GIVE A PICTURE OF SIN. We here have the finger of God, pointing out on the great map of living creation the natural and material symbols of depravity. The combined characteristics of the creatures here declared unclean furnish an exact exhibition of what sin is. They constitute a living mirror in which the sinner may look at himself. 1. In the first place he is unclean, filthy, disagreeable, noxious. There may be some good qualities, as there were in many of the unclean creatures; but, upon the whole, he is unclean. Impurity is upon him. He is unfit for holy association, or to come acceptably before God. 2. In the next place he is brutish. His character is typified by the vile and noxious of living things. He was originally made but a little lower than the angels. And what are the effects of sin upon him in whom it reigns? It dethrones intellect, and makes it the slave of mere impulse, nullifies the deductions of wisdom, stifles and overrides the conscience, and makes the man the servant of lust, living only

for selfish gratification, and following only the dictates of the baser nature. A brute is a thing bent downward. It goes upon its hands. Its face is towards the ground. And what is a slave of sin but one whose eyes have been diverted from heaven, and whose absorbing attention is directed to what is earthy? A brute is a creature destined to perish. Its spirit goeth downward. Its end is extinction. How like the sinner in his guilt! What hope has he for another world? But he is not only like what all brutes are in common, but also more or less like what the several kinds of unclean creatures are in particular. Sin is the ugliness and spitefulness of the camel; the burrowing, secretive, wily disposition of the coney, the rabbit, and the fox; the filthy sensuality of the hog; the stupid stubbornness of the ass; the voracious appetency of the dog, the wolf, the jackal, and hyena; the savage ferocity and bloodthirstiness of the tiger, the panther, and the lion; the sluggishness of the sloth; the prowling shyness and cruelty of the cat; and the base treachery and mischievousness of multitudes of unclean creatures that roam in darkness. It is the abominable thing which God hateth. It is of all things the most hideous, an uncleanness which cannot be expressed, a filthiness so intense that God cannot look upon it with the least degree of allowance. 3. But it is just as abundant as it is hateful. The unclean creatures are as numerous and abounding as they are base. The air is full of them; the earth is alive with them; the ocean teems with innumerable kinds of them. They cover every mountain, they crowd every plain. The crevices of the rocks are filled with them; the deserts have them as numerous as sands. The trees of the forests are thick with them; every stream and fountain contains them. They move about every street; they play in every field. They are upon the most beautiful flowers, and crawl within the most guarded enclosures. They are in our houses; they come up upon our tables; they creep into our very beds. They are present in every climate. They may be seen at all seasons. They continue with all generations. And as these unclean things abound, so does sin abound; for they are God's natural types of sin. And looking at the appointments of this chapter as a mere remembrancer of sin, it seems to me very remarkable. How impressive the arrangement! All living nature, by a few simple words, at once transmuted into a thousand tongues to remind and warn of sin and uncleanness! I do not say that there is no good in the world. There are clean as well as unclean. There always have been good and piety in the earth, and some virtuous ones among the base. But, with all, there were more vile than clean. We have not escaped this uncleanness which has gone out over all the earth. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*)

Minute enactments:—Many people have a notion that there is something unworthy, or, if I may not be misunderstood, undignified, in God descending to such paltry regulations, or, as they would call it, to little things. But may not this be proof of His presence? The truth is, I know not whether God is greatest when He wheels and wheels the planets in their orbits, or when He clothes the lily with all its loveliness, and finds its daily food for the ephemeral insect that is born and perishes in a day. God's greatest glory is often in His ministry to the minutest things. We call them minute because, with considerable self-conceit, we make ourselves the standpoint from which we look at everything; that which is very much above ourselves we think very great, and that which is below ourselves we think very little; whereas the truth is that the microscope has revealed to man far more stupendous wonders in a drop of water than the telescope has revealed in the starry firmament above him; and we have more majestic footprints of infinite wisdom, beneficence, and power, and love, visible in an atom of dust than in the firmament above us. And, therefore, it was not unworthy of God, who ministers to His creatures the bread of life, to lay down what I may call these dietetic precepts, or such regulations for their nutriment as are given in this and parallel chapters. God wants man not only to be happy in heaven, but He wants him to be happy on earth; and He takes the way of making him happy by trying in these rubrics to show him that sin and disobedience to His Word are the spring of misery; that obedience to God's Word is the source of all true and lasting happiness. The classification that is made here is a most remarkable one. It is not wholly an arbitrary one; but evidently a distinction originally inherent in the animal economy. The distinctions that are drawn here have lasted till now, and are practically acted on. For instance, animals that are called graminivorous and ruminative, and that divide the hoof, are still found to be most wholesome for food. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*)

Distinguishing the precious from the vile:—I. THAT GOD'S PEOPLE, THE SPIRITUAL ISRAEL, MOVE IN A SCENE OF MINGLED GOOD AND EVIL. 1. In the sphere of daily life

we have contact with both. 2. Our contact with them entails the danger of contamination. 3. In such a defiling sphere our duty is to separate the precious from the vile. II. THAT IN LIFE'S MINGLED SCENE THE GODLY MUST EXERCISE CONTINUAL VIGILANCE. 1. We enter, by relationship with Christ, into a separated life. 2. Such a separated life must assert itself in habitual avoidance of prohibited things. 3. Minute distinctions are forced upon us by this principle of conduct. III. THAT BY STRICTEST ADHERENCE TO DIVINE DIRECTIONS SANCTITY OF LIFE SHOULD BE MAINTAINED. 1. Every godly soul is, to a degree, put in trust with the imparted sanctity. 2. Derived sanctity is no assurance against defilement if we forsake God's commands. (*W. H. Jellie.*) *Lessons*:—1. All the creatures good in themselves. 2. Of the provident care of God toward both the souls and bodies of men. 3. God no respecter of persons (ver. 3). 4. Of the difference of sins, and divers degrees of spiritual uncleanness. 5. The doctrine may be good, though the doctors and teachers are evil. 6. Holiness the end of the precepts of the law (ver. 44). 7. The virtue of the sacraments depends not on the worthiness of the minister. (*A. Will t, D. D.*) *Types of manhood*:—1. Of meditating in the Word of God. Whereas the chewing of the cud was one mark to know a clean beast by: hereby is understood that we should meditate, and, as it were, ruminate on the Word of God (Psa. i. 1, 2). 2. To the knowledge of the Word, to join practice. Besides chewing the cud, the clean beast was to divide the hoof. Men in their life should discern between good and evil works, and to their profession of the Word add the practice of a good life. 3. Of divers vices to be shunned, shadowed forth in the natural properties of some creatures. (1) Rich men in this world are compared to camels, and the cumbersome burden of their riches to the bunch on the camel's back. (2) The coney, which undermines and makes holes in the ground, is an emblem of crafty and deceitful men who entrap others by subtle wiles. (3) The timorous and fearful hare that is afraid of the least noise, is an image of carnal and faint-hearted men, who, in the day of trouble, know not which way to turn. (4) A swine, always rooting in the ground and wholly occupied in filling his belly, is a true image of worldly-minded men who despise heavenly treasure, and care only for the things of this life. (5) Whereas there are twenty several fowls counted unclean for meat, it is observed that most of them are such as live by rapine, feed on carrion, or delight in darkness: representing three sorts of unclean persons—covetous, oppressors, and extortioners. (6) The young eagle first picks out the eye of the carcase: denoting the guile and manner of false teachers and deceivers, that would take away the eye of knowledge and right judgment (Matt. xxiii. 13). (7) The vulture lives altogether on carrion and dead carcases: representing those who wait for other men's death, and fraudulently suborn devised testaments. (8) The raven is unkind to his young ones, and forsakes his nest: a true type of such as embrace this present world, and leave the society of the saints, and the fellowship of the Church—Demas. (9) The ostrich signifies hypocrites; having wings, but flying not: so the hypocrite has the spirit of virtue, but not the power. (10) The owl, who sees in the night, but his eyes dazzle in the day, signifies worldly wise men, who in the matters of the world are quick-sighted enough, but blind in spiritual things (1 Cor. ii. 13). (11) The seagull, who lives and dives in the water, represents men given to pleasure (1 Pet. iv. 3, 4). (12) They write of the pelican, that she nourishes and embraces her young ones, and with the kisses, as it were, of her bill, wounds and so kills them, and afterwards revives them with her own blood: a true resemblance of cockering parents, who make their children wantons, and spoil them through too much indulgence. (13) The swan is white without and fair to see, but her flesh is black and unwholesome. Hereby are described proud persons, that want inward substance, carrying outwardly goodly shows. (14) The stork, though much celebrated for her natural affection to her parents, yet is counted an unclean bird, because she feeds on unclean and poisonous meats—as serpents, snakes, and such like: betokening such men as have a show of some civil virtues, and yet have no delight in God's Word, the wholesome food of the soul. 4. Of the necessity of sanctification. 5. Of separating the clean from the unclean. (*Ibid.*) *Clean and unclean animals*:—It is of much significance to note, in the first place, that a large part of the animals which are forbidden as food are unclean feeders. It is a well-ascertained fact that even the cleanest animal, if its food be unclean, becomes dangerous to health if its flesh be eaten. The flesh of a cow which has drunk water contaminated with typhoid germs, if eaten, especially if insufficiently cooked, may communicate typhoid fever to him who eats it. It is true, indeed, that not all animals that are prohibited are unclean in their food; but the fact remains that, on

the other hand, among those which are allowed is to be found no animal whose ordinary habits of life, especially in respect of food, are unclean. But, in the second place, an animal which is not unclean in its habits may yet be dangerous for food, if it be, for any reason, specially liable to disease. One of the greatest discoveries of modern science is the fact that a large number of diseases to which animals are liable are due to the presence of low forms of parasitic life. To such diseases those which are unclean in their feeding will be especially exposed, while none will perhaps be found wholly exempt. Another discovery of recent times, which has a no less important bearing on the question raised by this chapter, is the now ascertained fact that many of the parasitic diseases are common to both animals and men and may be communicated from the former to the latter. In the light of such facts as these, it is plain that an ideal dietary law would, as far as possible, exclude from human food all animals which, under given conditions, might be especially liable to these parasitic diseases, and which, if their flesh should be eaten, might thus become a frequent medium of communicating them to men. Now it is a most remarkable and significant fact that the tendency of the most recent investigations of this subject has been to show that the prohibitions and permissions of the Mosaic Law concerning food, as we have seen in this chapter, become apparently explicable in view of the above facts. Not to refer to other authorities, among the latest competent testimonies on this subject is that of Dr. Noel Gueneau de Mussy, in a paper presented to the Paris Academy of Medicine in 1885, in which he is quoted as saying: "There is so close a connection between the thinking being and the living organism in man, so intimate a solidarity between moral and material interests, and the useful is so constantly and so necessarily in harmony with the good, that these two elements cannot be separated in hygiene. . . . It is this combination which has exercised so great an influence on the preservation of the Israelites, despite the very unfavourable external circumstances in which they have been placed. . . . The idea of parasitic and infectious maladies, which has conquered so great a position in modern pathology, appears to have greatly occupied the mind of Moses, and to have dominated all his hygienic rules. He excludes from Hebrew dietary animals particularly liable to parasites; and as it is in the blood that the germs or spores of infectious disease circulate, he orders that they must be drained of their blood before serving for food." It may be added that upon this principle we may also easily explain, in a rational way, the very minute prescriptions of the law with regard to defilement by dead bodies. For immediately upon death begins a process of corruption which produces compounds not only obnoxious to the senses but actively poisonous in character; and what is of still more consequence to observe, in the case of all parasitic and infectious diseases, the energy of the infection is specially intensified when the infected person or animal dies. Hence the careful regulations as to cleansing of those persons or things which had been thus defiled by the dead: either by water, where practicable, or, where the thing could not be thus thoroughly cleansed, by burning the article with fire, the most certain of all disinfectants. But if this be indeed the principle which underlies this law of the clean and the unclean as here given, it will then be urged that since the Hebrews have observed this law with strictness for centuries, they ought to show the evidence of this in a marked immunity from sickness, as compared with other nations, and especially from diseases of an infectious character; and a consequent longevity superior to that of the Gentiles who pay no attention to these laws. Now it is the fact, and one which evidently furnishes another powerful argument for this interpretation, that this is exactly what we see. Even so long ago as the days when the plague was desolating Europe, the Jews so universally escaped infection that, by this their exemption, the popular suspicion was excited into fury, and they were accused of causing the fearful mortality among their Gentile neighbours by poisoning the wells and springs. In our own day, in the recent cholera epidemic in Italy, a correspondent of the *Jewish Chronicle* testifies that the Jews enjoyed almost absolute immunity, at least from fatal attack. Professor Hosmer says: "Throughout the entire history of Israel, the wisdom of the ancient lawgiver in these respects has been remarkably shown. In times of pestilence the Jews have suffered far less than others; as regards longevity and general health, they have in every age been noteworthy, and, at the present day, in the life-insurance offices, the life of a Jew is said to be worth much more than that of men of other stock." (S. H. Kellogg, D.D.) *Answers to objections respecting these regulations*:—It is very strange that it should have been objected to this view, that since the law declares the reason for these regulations to have been religious,

therefore any supposed reference herein to the principles of hygiene is by that fact excluded. For surely the obligation so to live as to conserve and promote the highest bodily health must be regarded, both from a natural, and a Biblical and Christian point of view, as being no less really a religious obligation than truthfulness or honesty. The central idea of the Levitical holiness was consecration unto God, as the Creator and Redeemer of Israel—consecration in the most unreserved sense, for the most perfect possible service. But the obligation to such a consecration, as the essence of a holy character, surely carried with it, by necessary consequence, then, as now, the obligation to maintain all the powers of mind and body also in the highest possible perfection. That, as regards the body, and, in no small degree, the mind as well, this involves the duty of the preservation of health, so far as in our power; and that this, again, is conditioned by the use of a proper diet, as one factor of prime importance, will be denied by no one. It may be asked, by way of further objection to this interpretation of these laws: Upon this understanding of the immediate purpose of these laws, how can we account for the selection of such test-marks of the clean and the unclean as the chewing of the cud, and the dividing of the hoof, or having scales and fins? What can the presence or absence of these peculiarities have to do with the greater or less freedom from parasitic disease of the animals included or excluded in the several classes? It may fairly be replied, that the object of the law was not to give accurately distributed categories of animals, scientifically arranged, according to hygienic principles, but was purely practical; namely, to secure, so far as possible, the observance by the whole people of such a dietary as in the land of Palestine would, on the whole, best tend to secure perfect bodily health. It may be objected, again, that according to recent researches, it appears that cattle, which occupy the foremost place in the permitted diet of the Hebrews, are found to be especially liable to tubercular disease, and capable, apparently, under certain conditions, of communicating it to those who feed upon their flesh. And it has been even urged that to this source is due a large part of the consumption which is responsible for so large part of our mortality. Two answers may be given. First, and most important, is the observation that we have as yet no statistics as to the prevalence of disease of this kind among cattle in Palestine; and that, presumably, if we may argue from the climatic conditions of its prevalence among men, it would be found far less frequently there among cattle than in Europe and America. Further, it must be remembered that, in the case even of clean cattle, the law very strictly provides elsewhere that the clean animal which is slain for food shall be absolutely free from disease; so that still we see here, no less than elsewhere, the hygienic principles ruling the dietary law. It will be perhaps objected, again, that if all this be true, then, since abstinence from unwholesome food is a moral duty, the law concerning clean and unclean meats should be of universal and perpetual obligation; whereas, in fact, it is explicitly abrogated in the New Testament, and is not held to be now binding on any one. But the abrogation of the law of Moses touching clean and unclean food can be easily explained, in perfect accord with all that has been said as to its nature and intent. In the first place, it is to be remembered that it is a fundamental characteristic of the New Testament law as contrasted with that of the Old, that on all points it leaves much more to the liberty of the individual, allowing him to act according to the exercise of an enlightened judgment, under the law of supreme love to the Lord, in many matters which, in the Old Testament day, were made a subject of specific regulation. But, aside from considerations of this kind, there is a specific reason why these laws of Moses concerning diet and defilement by dead bodies, if hygienic in character, should not have been made, in the New Testament, of universal obligation, however excellent they might be. For it is to be remembered that these laws were delivered for a people few in number, living in a small country, under certain definite climatic conditions. But it is well known that what is unwholesome for food in one part of the world may be, and often is, necessary to the maintenance of health elsewhere. A class of animals which, under the climatic conditions of Palestine, may be specially liable to certain forms of parasitic disease, under different climatic conditions may be comparatively free from them. Abstinence from fat is commanded in the law of Moses (chap. iii. 17), and great moderation in this matter is necessary to health in hot climates; but, on the contrary, to eat fat largely is necessary to life in the polar regions. From such facts as these it would follow, of necessity, that when the Church of God, as under the new dispensation, was now to become a world-wide organisation, still to have insisted on a dietetic law perfectly adapted only to Palestine would have been to defeat the physical

object, and by consequence the moral end for which that law was given. Under these conditions, except a special law were to be given for each land and climate, there was and could be, if we have before us the true conception of the ground of these regulations, no alternative but to abrogate the law. (*Ibid.*)

Bodily holiness:—It follows, as a present-day lesson of great moment, that the holiness which God requires has to do with the body as well as the soul, even with such commonplace matters as our eating and drinking. This is so, because the body is the instrument and organ of the soul, with which it must do all its work on earth for God, and because, as such, the body, no less than the soul, has been redeemed unto God by the blood of His Son. There is, therefore, no religion in neglecting the body and ignoring the requirements for its health, as ascetics have in all ages imagined. Neither is there religion in pampering, and thus abusing, the body, after the manner of the sensual in all ages. The principle which inspires this chapter is that which is expressed in 1 Cor. x. 31. If, therefore, a man needlessly eats such things, or in such a manner as may be injurious to health, he sins, and has come short of the law of perfect holiness. No less needful is the lesson of this law to many who are at the opposite extreme. For as there are those who are so taken up with the soul and its health, that they ignore its relation to the body, and the bearing of bodily conditions upon character, so there are others who are so preoccupied with questions of bodily health, sanitation and hygiene, regarded merely as prudential measures, from an earthly point of view, that they forget that man has a soul as well as a body, and that such questions of sanitation and hygiene only find their proper place when it is recognised that health and perfection of the body are not to be sought merely that man may become a more perfect animal, but in order that thus, with a sound mind in a sound body, he may the more perfectly serve the Lord in the life of holiness to which we are called. (*Ibid.*)

Apologetic value of this law:—The question will at once come up in every reflecting mind: Whence came this law? Could it have been merely an invention of crafty Jewish priests? Or is it possible to account for it as the product merely of the mind of Moses? It appears to have been ordered with respect to certain facts, especially regarding various invisible forms of noxious parasitic life, in their bearing on the causation and propagation of disease—facts which, even now, are but just appearing within the horizon of modern science. Is it probable that Moses knew about these things three thousand years ago? Certainly, the more we study the matter the more we must feel that this is not to be supposed. It is common, indeed, to explain much that seems very wise in the law of Moses by referring to the fact that he was a highly educated man, "instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." But it is just this fact of his Egyptian education that makes it in the last degree improbable that he should have derived the ideas of this law from Egypt. Could he have taken his ideas with regard, for instance, to defilement by the dead, from a system of education which taught the contrary, and which, so far from regarding those who had to do with the dead as unclean, held them especially sacred? And so with regard to the dietetic laws: these are not the laws of Egypt; nor have we any evidence that those were determined, like these Hebrew laws, by such scientific facts as we have referred to. Whence had this man this unique wisdom three thousand years in advance of his times? The secret will be found, not in the court of Pharaoh, but in the holy tent of meeting: it is all explained if we but assume that which is written in the first verse of this chapter is true: "The Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron." (*Ibid.*)

The clean and the unclean:—Here we find Jehovah entering, in most marvellous detail, into a description of beasts, birds, fishes, and reptiles, and furnishing His people with various marks by which they were to know what was clean and what was unclean. With regard to beasts, two things were essential to render them clean—they should chew the cud and divide the hoof. We pass on to the consideration of that which the Levitical ceremonial taught with respect to "all that are in the waters." Here, again, we find the double mark (vers. 9, 10). Two things were necessary to render a fish ceremonially clean, namely, "fins and scales," which, obviously, set forth a certain fitness for the sphere and element in which the creature had to move. But, doubtless, there was more than this. If a fish needs a "fin" to enable him to move through the water, and "scales" to resist the action thereof, so does the believer need that spiritual capacity which enables him to move onward through the scene with which he is surrounded, and, at the same time, to resist its influence—to prevent its penetrating—to keep it out. These are precious qualities. From ver. 13 to ver. 24 of our chapter we have the law with respect

to birds. All of the carnivorous kind, that is, all that fed on flesh, were unclean. The omnivorous, or those who could eat anything, were unclean. All those which, though furnished with power to soar into the heavens, would, nevertheless, grovel upon the earth, were unclean. As to the latter class, there were some exceptional cases (vers. 21, 22); but the general rule, the fixed principle, the standing ordinance, was as distinct as possible; "all fowls that creep, going upon all fours, shall be an abomination unto you" (ver. 20). All this is very simple in its instruction to us. Those fowls that could feed upon flesh; those that could swallow anything or everything; and all grovelling fowls were to be unclean to the Israel of God, because so pronounced by the God of Israel; nor can the spiritual mind have any difficulty in discerning the fitness of such an ordinance. We can not only trace in the habits of the above three classes of fowl the just ground of their being pronounced unclean; but we can also see in the striking exhibition of that, in nature, which is to be strenuously guarded against by every true Christian. Such an one is called to refuse everything of a carnal nature. Moreover, he cannot feed promiscuously upon everything that comes before him. He must "try the things that differ." Finally, he must use his wings—rise on the pinions of faith, and find his place in the celestial sphere to which he belongs. As to "creeping things" (see ver. 41). How wonderful to think of the condescending grace of Jehovah! He could stoop to give directions about a crawling reptile. He would not leave His people at a loss as to the most trivial affair. The priest's guide-book contained the most ample instructions as to everything. He desired to keep His people free from the defilement consequent upon touching, tasting, or handling aught that was unclean. They were not their own, and hence they were not to do as they pleased. (*C. H. Mackintosh.*) *The right use of things*:—We are easily led in the direction of our preferences. All the animals in this chapter were good creatures of God, in the sense of having been created by the Almighty. "And these are they which ye shall have in abomination among the fowls; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: the eagle," &c. Who made these? God. Then are they not good creatures of God? Possibly so; but they are forbidden in that particular use. You do not depose the creature from any dignity to which it is entitled as a creation of God; you do but discern the right use and purpose of the creature in the intent of God. This argument must be applied to every man according to his own circumstances. The argument of the chapter does not end in itself. There are educational beginnings; there are points to start with. The argument is cumulative and becomes stronger and stronger as the instances are plied in illustration of its meaning. Is God so careful about the body and has He written no schedule of directions about the feeding of the mind? May the body not eat of this, but the soul eat of everything? Are there poisons which take away the life of the body, and no poisons that take away the life of the spirit, the mind, the soul? That is the chapter magnified by spirituality. This is an instance of how things may be made symbols of truth infinitely greater than themselves. It is impossible to believe that God, who takes care of the body, pays no attention to the soul. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The coney unclean*:—The coney was a very timid creature, which burrowed in the rocks. Now, there are some people who seem as if they like the gospel truth, and they may be put down in the class in which Moses puts the coney, which appeared to chew the cud, though it did not really do so. They like the gospel, but it must be very cheap. They like to hear it preached, but as to doing anything to extend it, unless it were to lend their tongues an hour, they would not dream of it. The coney, you know, lived in the earth. These people are always scraping. John Bunyan's muck-rake is always in their hands. Neither to dig nor to beg are they ashamed. They are as true misers, and as covetous, as if they had no religion at all. And many of these people get into our Churches and are received when they ought not to be. Covetousness ought to exclude a man from Church fellowship as well as fornication, for Paul says, "Covetousness, which is idolatry." He puts the brand right on its forehead, and marks what it is. We would not admit an idolater to the Lord's table; nor ought we to admit a covetous man; only we cannot always know him. St. Francis de Sales, who had a great many people come to him to confession, makes this note, that he had many men and women come to him who confessed all sorts of most outrageous crimes, but he never had one who confessed covetousness. It is a kind of sin that always comes in at the back door, and it is always entertained at the back part of the house. People do not suspect it as an inmate of their own hearts. Mr. Covetousness has changed his name to Mr. Prudent-Thrifty; and it is quite an insult to call him

other than by his adopted name. Old vices, like streets notorious for vice, get new names given them. Avaricious grasping, they call that only "the laws of social economy"; screwing down the poor is "the natural result of competition"; withholding corn until the people curse, oh! that is "just the usual regulation of the market." People name the thing prettily, and then they think they have rescued it from the taint. These people, who are all for earth, are like the coney who, though they chew the cud, burrow in the ground. They love precious truth, and yet they are all for this earth. If there are any such here, despite their fine experience, we pronounce them unclean—they are not heirs of heaven. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

The hare unclean:—The hare is such a timid creature; she leaveth her food, and fleeth before the passer-by. I would not say a hard thing, but there are some people who appear to chew the cud, they love to hear the gospel preached; their eyes will sparkle sometimes when we are talking of Christ, but they do not divide the hoof. Like the hare, they are too timid to be domesticated among the creatures whom the Lord has pronounced clean. They do not come out from the world, enter into the Church, and manifest themselves wholly on the Lord's side. Their conscience tells them they should be united with the people of God, and confess Christ before men—but they are ashamed! One fears lest his wife should know it, and she might ridicule. Some start abashed lest their friends should know it, for the finger of scorn or the breath of raillery could frighten them out of their senses. Others of them are alarmed because the world might, perchance, give them an ill name. Do you know where the fearful go? The fearful that are afraid of being persecuted, mocked, or even laughed at for Christ—do you know where they go? "But the fearful and unbelieving shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Have you never read that sentence which says, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels"? There you are, young man! you are ashamed of Christ. You have just come up from the country, and you did not pray to God the other night because there was another young man in the room, and you were ashamed of Him. There are others of you who work in a large shop, and you do not want to be jeered at, as the other young fellow is who works with you, because he is a Christian. You keep your love as a secret, do you, and will not let it out? What! if Christ had only loved you in secret, and had never dared to come on earth to be despised and rejected of men, where would you have been? Do you think that Christ has lit a candle in your hearts that you may hide it? Oh! I pray you, be not like the hare. Let your hoof be so divided from the rest of mankind that they may say, "There is a man—he is not as bold as a lion, mayhap, but he is not ashamed to be a follower of Jesus; he does bear the sneer and gibe for Him, and counts it his honour to be thought evil of for Jesu's sake." Oh! be not, I pray you, like the timid hare, lest you be found among the unclean! (*Ibid.*) These shall ye eat of all that are in the waters.—*Clean and unclean fish*:—It is a well-known fact, that all fish that have both scales and fins are both wholesome and nutritious. This provision, therefore, secured to the people the free use of what was certainly profitable, and kept them back from the uncertainty of choosing among the others what might have injured them. Again, therefore, they were taught that it is better far to lean to the side of abstinence, in doubtful cases, than to run the risk of doing evil. They were trained to the principle, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth" (1 Cor. viii. 13). Those "without fins or scales" are partly creatures of the mud and marsh; whereas the others swim through the clear, limpid waters of "seas and rivers." Others of them that are "without scales," are such as the voracious shark. Thus they were naturally fitted to exhibit purity. In ver. 9 we are to read, "in the waters, *i.e.*, whether seas or river." In ver. 10, "All that move in the waters," is rather, "All that crawl in the waters"; and even any living thing there that has not the specified qualities. In the same verse, and at ver. 11, "They shall be an abomination," is more emphatic if read thus—"They are an abomination to you, and they shall be an abomination." And it is thus strongly stated, because the people might be ready to neglect the rule in the case of some of the smaller creatures in the water. Many of the forbidden creatures are exceedingly small in size; yet, nevertheless, even that atom is to be abhorred, if the Lord has given the command. It is not the importance of the thing, but the majesty of the lawgiver, that is to be the standard of our obedience. "Sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John iii. 4). There were tribes that were to dwell by the waters. Thus Simeon and Dan had a sea-coast from the river of

Egypt up to Joppa. Ephraim and the half tribe of Manasseh had a sea-coast as far as Carmel—the glorious plain of Sharon descending to the waterside. Zebulun and Asher, too, had their creeks and bays; while Napthali, as well as Zebulun and the other half tribe of Manasseh, encircled the lake of Galilee, so plentiful in its supply of fish; and the waters of Merom, no doubt, swarmed with their kinds. Others of the tribes lay near Jordan, or had some lesser streams and lakes at hand. Hence there was not probably one tribe but had some need of these laws and opportunity for exercising faith by attending to them. The Lord also thus evidenced His care over the spiritual health of the seamen and fishers of Israel. It tried their faith when they needed to cast away whatever unclean fish they had enclosed in their net. Some, indeed, might reckon such minute and arbitrary rules as these to be trifling. But the principle involved in obedience or disobedience was none other than the same principle which was tried in Eden at the foot of the forbidden tree. It was really this—Is the Lord to be obeyed in all things whatsoever He commands? Is He a holy Lawgiver? Are His creatures bound to give implicit assent to His will? But this discrimination between holy and unholy penetrated farther. It reached Israel's hours of recreation, and kept them, even then, in mind of their Holy One. A wealthy Israelite, who has his villa by the lake of Gennesaret, goes forth on the bosom of the lake. In its clear waters he finds fish, darning on before the slow-sailing bark in the strength of their fins, and reflecting back to the surface, from their scales, the light that fell on the waters. All here speaks of purity—conformity to what the law pronounced clean. But at another time he strolls along by some shallow, or is compassing the waters of Merom, and there he finds the crawling reptiles of the mud and marsh—teaching him to draw back in haste from the touch of uncleanness. In like manner, far within their land, at the little brook flowing through the valley of Elah, fringed by its green terebinths, the youth of Judah, in their sports, were taught to keep before them the difference between good and evil, while they scrupulously rejected the unclean minnows, and chose the clean, amid their easy angling at the stream. “Holiness to the Lord”—obedience to His revealed will—thus pervaded Israel's land and Israel's families, in public and in secret, in business and in recreation; their youth and their aged men, in their fields and by their riversides, must remember “The Holy One of Israel!” (*A. A. Bonar.*)

Among the fowls.—*Lessons from the fowls*:—The eagle, darting down from the hills of Moab or Bashan, or from the heights of Lebanon, would often teach the shepherd who saw his flock thus endangered. Those by the sea shore would have the same lesson taught them when the sight or cry of the sea-eagle and fish-hawk called to their mind that God had made a difference between the clean and unclean even in the fowls of the air. The vulture, in their streets or highways, allured by the scent of death, and the kite, poised on its wings till it found a prey upon which to dart down, and the hoarse, unpleasant note of the raven would constantly recall the same distinctions, while their loathsome qualities would serve to make the feeling of uncleanness more and more detestable to the men of Israel. While in the wilderness, and afterwards on their borders, they would meet with the ostrich, whose disagreeable cries, voracious habits, and parental unkindness, would all contribute to deepen their aversion to whatever was unclean. And not less so the small, but most ravenous night-hawk that flies in at the open windows and seeks the life of infants; and the seagull incessantly watching for its victims, over whom it screams in savage delight; and the hawk, so furious in its attack on the birds of the air; and the owl at evening, awake for designs of destruction. All these, every time they were seen, helped to deepen Israel's remembrance of the difference between holy and unholy, and to give them intimations of the hateful qualities of sin. (*Ibid.*)

The eagle as a type:—Reminds one of those people who are conspicuous for certain noble and praiseworthy qualities, but also for qualities ignoble and deserving of the sternest condemnation. 1. Here is a man who is just, but has no mercy. 2. Another man is kind, but ill-tempered. 3. Ill-temper is often associated with earnestness. 4. Another man is moral, but niggardly. (*A. F. Forrest.*)

The osprey as a type:—The osprey has been identified with the sea-eagle. Some species of it is to be found in almost every part of the world. The most noticeable thing about it is its fierce temper. A writer describes “its savage scream of anger, when any one approaches the neighbourhood of its nest, its intimidating gestures, and even its attempts to molest individuals who have ventured among its native crags.” Like the osprey, some people are most noticeable for their ill-nature. 1. People with bad tempers are terribly numerous. 2. Nothing so much embitters the intercourse

of life as the ebullitions of a violent disposition. 3. There are more unhappy homes through bad temper than through any other cause. 4. There is this great peculiarity often about ill-tempered people: they are very good in other respects. 5. Society may be to blame somewhat for the great prevalence of bad temper. It should not be spoken of (as it usually is) as a misfortune, but as a sin. 6. The Bible regards bad temper as a sin, and its denunciations of it are of the most unmistakable character (see Eccles. viii. 9; Matt. v. 22; 1 John iii. 15). 7. But the punishment of anger is not altogether in the next life—in the future. (1) The ill-natured man is always a troubled man. Seldom at peace with himself. (2) Then there is a physical element in the retribution which in this world falls upon the man of great wrath. When anger is excited in the mind, it affects the body instantly and violently in the most vital parts. 8. Anger leads to other and often greater evils. 9. One of the grandest sights is to see a man, under circumstances of provocation and injury, restraining his anger and showing a composed and peaceful spirit. 10. A good practical specific for the treatment of anger is that given by Solomon (Prov. xix. 11). 11. These ebullitions of temper are not Christlike. 12. Sometimes people attempt to palliate their bad temper on the ground of natural disposition. This is a delusion. (*Ibid.*) *The vulture as a type*:—The vulture is a type of those people who revel in the wreck of their neighbour's reputation. 1. These are people you never like to meet. They have nothing good to say of anybody. 2. In their stories they uniformly exaggerate. 3. Their caution is remarkable. 4. The gossip makes a pretence of wishing a thing to be kept a secret. But it is only that he may himself enjoy the monopoly of the scandal, and be the first to tell it to everybody. 5. This depraved habit of evil-speaking may spring from various causes. (1) Envy. (2) Revenge. (3) Pride. 6. Of all bad people, none are so thoroughly bad as the tale-bearer. Conclusion: 1. The way to keep the city clean is for every one to sweep before his own door. 2. Expulsive of the feeling which swells in the bosom of the evil-speaker is that charity which thinketh no evil. (*Ibid.*) *The kite as a type*:—1. The kite is remarkable for its very keen sight, and for the immense velocity with which it darts upon its prey. But, its legs and claws being weak, it is withal a cowardly creature. It never attacks large prey, but only insects, mice, and small birds. 2. God would have His people characterised by courage and a spirit of noble heroism. I. THE LOWEST FORM OF COURAGE IS THAT WHICH MEETS DANGER UNCONSCIOUS OF FEAR OR FLINCHING. Bravery. A constitutional quality. Costs no effort. II. A higher form of courage is THAT WHICH SHRINKS NOT IN THE PRESENCE OF DANGER, NOT FROM INSENSIBILITY TO IT, BUT FROM PATRIOTISM, or friendship, or some such noble feeling. III. A still higher courage is THAT WHICH ADHERES TO DUTY—to truth and conscience, in the face of opposition and hardship. 1. How few have the courage of their convictions! 2. Many are cowards only in the matter of avowing and adhering to their religious principles. 3. What you are convinced is right, do, whether the world frowns or smiles, sneers or applauds. Be influenced by no fear but the fear of God. 4. Do you do well to go away? Is it wise to lose heaven to escape from a laugh? 5. What is your cross compared to the cross of those who had, in their adherence to Christ, to brave imprisonment and death? (*Ibid.*) *The raven as a type*:—I take selfishness to be the leading characteristic of the raven. It has no pity and no generosity. With it "number one" is the only number. 1. God did not mean man to be like the raven. The happiness of the creature, like the happiness of the Creator, was to be in giving, and not in receiving. 2. What happiness thus did God intend for the human race! Nothing to hurt or destroy could even enter a society in which love held undisputed sway. 3. But the unhappy revolt of man from God, and his assertion of independence, effectually prevented the accomplishment of the Divine purpose. 4. Before, therefore, the mischief effected by the Fall of man can be adequately repaired, we must find that which will destroy the selfishness of man's heart. 5. The gospel of Jesus Christ, alone of all religious systems, has recognised this important fact, and proposed to remove the disorder by removing the cause. 6. The sufficiency of this remedy for man's disease has received abundant proof. 7. The early Christian Church affords us just such a spectacle of unselfish enthusiasm on behalf of the race as we would have anticipated from the renewal of men's hearts, and the restoration to them of the lost principle of benevolence. 8. Is it asked why in this age we have not a repetition of Pentecostal phenomena? The explanation is to be found in the character of those who are now entrusted with the commission to preach the gospel. The Christian of this age is only partially restored from his enmity against God, partially cured of his disease.

(*Ibid.*) *The owl as a type*:—A melancholy bird. Flies about at night. Children afraid of it. Owl typifies all moping, morose, melancholy people, who have no sunshine in their soul. 1. No Christian should belong to this genus. Inconsistent. 2. The Bible everywhere represents religion as a thing of joy. 3. This joy is entirely independent of worldly conditions. (*Ibid.*) *The bat as a type*:—The bat is a type of those people who seek both to walk in worldliness and to fly in heavenliness. Neither believers nor unbelievers; half for Satan, and half for God. 1. The vast majority of professing Christians belong, probably, to this genus. I have read of a Spanish bishop who took a strange way once of ending a controversy. The clergy in his diocese had been debating together in regard to the fate of Solomon in the other world. Some maintained that he was in heaven; others that he was in hell. They referred the matter at last to this dignity. He thought he would gratify both parties. Accordingly, he ordered an artist to paint on the walls of his chapel a picture of the Jewish king, representing him as half in hell and half in heaven. Multitudes of people could only be represented in the same way. 2. This state of indecision in religion may arise from various causes. (1) The fear of the world's laugh or frown may keep some from making a decided stand for God. (2) With others, an attachment to some particular form of sin. (3) The notion that there will be time enough yet to provide for a happy eternity. 3. However caused, this indecision is most unsatisfactory. Those in this state have neither the mirth of the sinner nor the happiness of the saint. "Woe to the double mind," says Augustine. "Of God's own they make a share—half to Him and half to the devil. But, indignant at such treatment, the Lord departs; and the devil gets all!" 4. Choose ye this day whom ye will serve. 5. Oh, why do you hesitate? (1) Is there some sin you are unwilling to abandon? You are paying too dear, surely, for your pleasures, if you are paying for them with your life. (2) Do you fear the frown or the laugh of the ungodly? Will the frown of God be easier to bear? Or will you wince less under the mockery of Satanic spirits? (3) Do you put off to another time? Death may intervene. One of the rivers of America had been greatly swollen by the excessive rains. A man, who had gone out in a boat to secure some logs, drifted accidentally into the current. All resistance was useless. Rapidly his boat was making for the great falls a few miles down the river. Destruction stared him in the face. There was only one slight chance of escape. A friend, seeing his danger, leaped on a horse and galloped to a bridge which the skiff would pass under just before reaching the cataract. Getting there in time, he hung a rope over the parapet for the man to clutch the moment he attained the arch. It was his only chance. The man knew his peril. He stood ready to grasp the rope the instant it was within his reach. Suddenly he makes a spring. He has it. The boat glides rapidly from under him and is dashed to pieces on the rocks. He is pulled up by his deliverer and saved. There may be but a step between you and death. Grasp the rope now. (*Ibid.*) *Every flying creeping thing*.—*Clean and unclean insects*:—All insects are unclean except four classes; for it is insects that are here meant by "the creatures that both fly and creep," using feet in the manner of quadrupeds. All reptiles, worms, and insects, *e.g.*, flies and bees, are thus pronounced unclean—except only the four classes that have springing legs, in addition to the legs used in creeping. The sight of insects without number in their groves, on the leaves of their fig-trees, or the vine-leaves that shaded them—the innumerable hosts that thickened the air at sunset, or that played on the waters, and from time to time alighted on the head of the solemn Jew who marked the sight—could not fail to remind the soul that it was encompassed with unholy things. I remember (while in Palestine in 1839) the vast number of such insects, some of them very beautiful and rare, which we saw one afternoon by the lake of Galilee, near Magdala; and, also, on a previous day at the pools of Solomon, near Bethlehem. They skimmed along the waters, or flew gaily through the air, or kept their seat upon a sappy leaf—and the eye could not but be attracted by them. Now an Israelite would feel in these insects a memorial of sin, however fair the external form appeared. No retirement into quiet seats and bowers could give freedom from the presence of what was unclean. The dragon-fly that wafted itself past their eye, and the many magnificent insects, though fed amid the fragrance of Lebanon and the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, were all made to speak of God having set a mark on this earth as no longer a paradise. These creatures on the wing were like messengers sent to admonish the saints of God that the sweetest spots of earth were polluted, and, therefore, they must watch and keep their garments. The only clean insects were the locusts—the insects so often used by God to punish a guilty land and an unclean people. (*A. A. Bonar.*)

CHAPTER XII.

VERS. 1-8. *She shall be unclean.—Birth-sin and its developments*.—The theme of the chapter is the same as that of the one preceding and the one following. The subject is sin, portrayed by symbols. In the division of the animals into clean and unclean we had the nature of sin in its general character and outward manifestations. It is a brutalisation of humanity. It has its type in all sorts of savage, noxious, vile, annoying creatures. But this chapter presents another and still more affecting phase of man's corruption. Surveying those masses of sin and vileness which hang about our world, the question arises, Whence comes it? How are we to account for it? It is useless to attribute it to errors in the structure of society, for society itself is the mere aggregate of human life, feelings, opinions, intercourse, agreement, and doings. It is man that corrupts society, and not society that corrupts man. The one may react very powerfully upon the other, but the errors and corruptions in both must have a common source. What is that seat? Penetrating to the moral signification of this chapter, we have the true answer. Sin is not only a grovelling brutality assumed or taken upon a man from without. It is a manifestation which comes from within. It is a corruption which cleaves to the nature, mingles with the very transmissions of life, and taints the vital forces as they descend from parent to child, from generation to generation. We are unclean, not only practically and by contact with a bad world, but innately. We were conceived in sin; we were shapen in iniquity. And it is just this that forms the real subject of this chapter. It is the type of the source and seat of human vileness. The uncleanness here spoken of is no more a real uncleanness than that attributed to certain animals in the preceding chapter. The whole regulation is ceremonial, and not at all binding upon us. It is an arbitrary law, made only for the time then present, as a figure of spiritual truths. Its great significance lies in its typical nature. And a more vivid and impressive picture can hardly be conceived. It imposes a special legal disability upon woman, and so connects with the fact that "the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (1 Tim. ii. 24). It is a vivid remembrancer of the occurrences in Eden. It tells us that we all have come of sinful mothers. It portrays defilement as the state in which we receive our being; for "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one" (Job xiv. 4). You may plant a good seed, and surround it with all the conditions necessary to a goodly plant; but it may put forth so eccentrically, or meet with some mishap in the incipient stages of its development, in consequence of which all its subsequent growth will be marred, and all its fruits give evidence of the adversities that befell it in the beginning. You may open a pure fountain, giving forth nothing but pure, good water; yet the issuing stream may touch upon poison and take up turbid commixtures at its first departure from its source, and so carry and show pollution whithersoever it goes. And so it has been with humanity. It was created pure and good, but by that power of free choice which necessarily belongs to a moral being some of its first movements were eccentric and detrimental to its original qualities. It absorbed vileness at its very beginning; and hence all its subsequent developments have upon them the taint of that first mishap and contagion. It is worse in some lines than in others. The operations of Divine grace in the parent doubtless help to enfeeble it in the child. Now it is just to this universal taint of human nature, derived from the defection of Adam, that the whole outgrowth of this world's iniquity is to be traced. By virtue of our relation to an infected parentage we come into the world with more or less affinity for evil. The presentation of the objects to which this proclivity leans awakens those biases into activity. This awakening of the power of lust is what we call temptation. There is an innate taint or bias, the presentation to which of the objects of evil desire involuntarily excites lust; and from this has flown out the flood of evil which has deluged all the earth. (*J. A. Sciss, D.D.*) In the eighth day the flesh . . . shall be circumcised.—*The ordinance of circumcision*.—Although the rite of circumcision here receives a new and special sanction, it had been appointed long before by God as the sign of His covenant with Abraham (Gen. xvii. 10-14). Nor was it, probably, even then a new thing. That the ancient Egyptians practised it is well known; so also did the Arabs and Phœnicians; in fact, the custom has been very extensively observed, not only by nations with whom the Israelites came in contact, but by others who have not had, in historic times, connection with any civilised peoples, as, e.g., the Congo negroes and certain Indian tribes in South America. The fundamental idea connected with

circumcision by most of the peoples who have practised it appears to have been physical purification; indeed, the Arabs call it by the name *tatur*, which has this precise meaning. And it deserves to be noticed that for this idea regarding circumcision there is so much reason in fact that high medical authorities have attributed to it a real hygienic value, especially in warm climates. No one need feel any difficulty in supposing that this common conception attached to the rite also in the minds of the Hebrews. Rather all the more fitting it was, if there was a basis in fact for this familiar opinion, that God should thus have taken a ceremony already known to the surrounding peoples, and in itself of a wholesome physical effect, and constituted it for Abraham and his seed a symbol of an analogous spiritual fact, namely, the purification of sin at its fountain-head, the cleansing of the evil nature with which we all are born. When the Hebrew infant was circumcised it was an outward sign and seal of the covenant of God with Abraham and with his seed to be a God to him and to his seed after him; and it signified further that this covenant of God was to be carried out and made effectual only through the putting away of the flesh, the corrupt nature with which we are born, and of all that belongs to it, in order that, thus circumcised with the circumcision of the heart, every child of Abraham might indeed be an Israelite in whom there should be no guile. And the law commands, in accord with the original command to Abraham, that the circumcision should take place on the eighth day. This is the more noticeable, that among other nations which practised or still practise the rite the time is different. The Egyptians circumcised their sons between the sixth and tenth years, the modern Mohammedans between the twelfth and fourteenth. What is the significance of this eighth day? In the first place, it is easy to see that we have in this direction a provision of God's mercy; for if delayed beyond infancy or early childhood, as among many other peoples, the operation is much more serious, and may even involve some danger, while in so early infancy it is comparatively trifling, and attended with no risk. Further, by the administration of circumcision at the very opening of life it is suggested that in the Divine ideal the grace which was signified thereby, of the cleansing of nature, was to be bestowed upon the child, not first at a late period of life, but from its very beginning, thus anticipating the earliest awakening of the principle of inborn sin. But the question still remains, Why was the eighth day selected, and not rather, *e.g.*, the sixth or seventh, which would have no less perfectly represented these ideas? The answer is to be found in the symbolic significance of the eighth day. As the old creation was completed in six days, with a following Sabbath of rest, so that six is ever the number of the old creation, as under imperfection and sin, the eighth day, the first of a new week, everywhere in Scripture appears as the number symbolic of the new creation, in which all things shall be restored in the great redemption through the Second Adam. The thought finds its fullest expression in the resurrection of Christ, as the Firstborn from the dead, the Beginning and the Lord of the new creation, who in His resurrection body manifested the firstfruits in physical life of the new creation, rising from the dead on the first, or, in other words, the day after the seventh, the eighth day. (*S. H. Kellogg, D.D.*)

Her purifying.—*Purification after child-birth*:—The teaching of this law is twofold: it concerns, first, the woman, and, secondly, the child which she bears. As regards the woman, it emphasises the fact that, because "first in the transgression," she is under special pains and penalties in virtue of her sex. The capacity of motherhood, which is her crown and glory, though still a precious privilege, has yet been made, because of sin, an inevitable instrument of pain, and that because of her relation to the first sin. We are thus reminded that the specific curse denounced against the woman (Gen. iii. 16) is no dead letter, but a fact. No doubt the conception is one which raises difficulties which in themselves are great, and to modern thought are greater than ever. Nevertheless, the fact abides unaltered that even to this day woman is under special pains and disabilities inseparably connected with her power of motherhood. But why should all the daughters of Eve suffer because of her sin? Where is the justice in such an ordinance? A question this is to which we cannot yet give any satisfactory answer. But it does not follow that because in any proposition there are difficulties which at present we are unable to solve therefore the proposition is false. And, further, it is important to observe that this law, under which womanhood abides, is after all only a special case under that law of the Divine government by which the iniquities of the fathers are visited upon the children. It is most certainly a law which, to our apprehension, suggests great moral difficulties, even to the most reverent spirits; but it is no less certainly a law which represents a conspicuous and tremendous fact, which is illustrated,

e.g., in the family of every drunkard in the world. And it is well worth observing that while the ceremonial law, which was specially intended to keep this fact before the mind and the conscience, is abrogated, the fact that woman is still under certain Divinely-imposed disabilities because of that first sin is reaffirmed in the New Testament, and is by apostolic authority applied in the administration of Church government (1 Tim. ii. 12, 13). But, in the second place, we may also derive abiding instruction from this law concerning the child which is of man begotten and of woman born. It teaches us that not only has the curse thus fallen on the woman, but that, because she is herself a sinful creature, she can only bring forth another sinful creature like herself; and if a daughter, then a daughter inheriting all her own peculiar infirmities and disabilities. The law, as regards both mother and child, expresses in the language of symbolism those words of David in his penitential confession (Psa. li. 5). Men may contemptuously call this "theology," or even rail at it as "Calvinism"; but it is more than theology, more than Calvinism; it is a *fact*, to which until this present time history has seen but one exception, even that mysterious Son of the Virgin, who claimed, however, to be no mere man, but the Christ, the Son of the Blessed! And yet many, who surely can think but superficially upon the solemn facts of life, still object to this most strenuously, that even the new-born child should be regarded as in nature sinful and unclean. Difficulty here we must all admit—difficulty so great that it is hard to overstate it—regarding the bearing of this fact on the character of the holy and merciful God, who in the beginning made man; and yet, surely, deeper thought must confess that herein the Mosaic view of infant nature—a view which is assumed and taught throughout Holy Scripture—however humbling to our natural pride, is only in strictest accord with what the admitted principles of the most exact science compel us to admit. For whenever, in any case, we find all creatures of the same class doing, under all circumstances, any one thing, we conclude that the reason for this can only lie in the nature of such creatures, antecedent to any influence of a tendency to imitation. If, for instance, the ox everywhere and always eats the green thing of the earth, and not flesh, the reason, we say, is found simply in the nature of the ox as he comes into being. So when we see all men everywhere, under all circumstances, as soon as ever they come to the time of free moral choice, always choosing and committing sin, what can we conclude—regarding this not as a theological, but merely as a scientific question—but that man, as he comes into the world, must have a sinful nature? And this being so, then why must not the law of heredity apply, according to which, by a law which knows of no exceptions, like ever produces its like? Least of all, then, should those object to the view of child-nature which is represented in this law who accept these commonplaces of modern science as representing facts. Wiser it were to turn attention to the other teaching of the law, that, notwithstanding these sad and humiliating facts, there is provision made by God, through the cleansing by grace of the very nature in which we are born and atonement for the sin which without our fault we inherit, for a complete redemption from all the inherited corruption and guilt. And especially should Christian parents with joy and thankfulness receive the manifest teaching of this law, that God our Father offers to parental faith Himself to take in hand our children, even from the earliest beginning of their infant days, and, purifying the fountain of their life through "a circumcision made without hands," receive the little ones into covenant relation with Himself, to their eternal salvation. (*Ibid.*)

CHAPTER XIII.

VERS. 2-46. *The plague of leprosy.—The cleansing of the leper:—I. THE LOATHSOME AND GHASTLY SPECTACLE OF A LEPER.* 1. A leper was extremely loathsome in his person. But let me remind you that this, fearful as it seems to be, is a very poor portrait of the loathsomeness of sin. If we could bear to hear what God could tell us of the exceeding wickedness and uncleanness of sin, I am sure we should die. God hides from all eyes but His own the blackness of sin. 2. The leper was not only loathsome in his person, but was defiled in all his acts. If he drank out of a vessel, the vessel was defiled. If he lay upon a bed, the bed became unclean, and whosoever sat upon the bed afterwards became unclean too. All that he did was

full of the same loathsomeness as was himself. Now this may seem to be a very humiliating truth, but faithfulness requires us to say it, all the actions of the natural man are tainted with sin. Whether he eats, or drinks, or whatsoever he does, he continues to sin against his God. 3. Being thus the medium of contagion and defilement wherever he went, the Lord demanded that he should be shut out from the society of Israel. Living apart from their dearest friends, shut out from all the pleasures of society, they were required never to drink of a running stream of water of which others might drink; nor might they sit down on any stone by the roadside upon which it was probable any other person might rest. They were, to all intents and purposes, dead to all the enjoyments of life, dead to all the endearments and society of their friends. Ay, and such is the case with the sinner with regard to the people of God. 4. Once more, the leper was wholly unable to come up to the house of God. Other men might offer sacrifices, but not the leper; others had a share in the high priest's great sacrifice, and when he went within the veil he appeared for all others; but the leper had neither part nor lot in this matter. He was shut out from God, as well as shut out from man. He was no partaker of the sacred things of Israel, and all the ordinances of the Tabernacle were as nothing to him. Think of that, sinner! As a sinner full of guilt thou art shut out from all communion with God. True, He gives thee the mercies of this life as the leper had his bread and water, but thou hast none of the spiritual joys which God affords to His people. II. I shall now BRING THE LEPER UP TO THE HIGH PRIEST. Here he stands; the priest has come out to meet him. Mark, whenever a leper was cleansed under the Jewish law—the leper did nothing—the priest did all. My text asserts that if there was found any sound place in him, he was unclean. But when the leprosy had covered him, whosoever the priest looked, then the man became by sacrificial rights a clean leper. Now, let me bring up the sinner before the great High Priest this morning. How many there are, who, as they come up hither, are ready to confess that they have done many things which are wrong, but they say, "Though we have done much which we cannot justify, yet there have been many good actions which might almost counterbalance the sin. Have we not been charitable to the poor, have we not sought to instruct the ignorant, to help those that are out of the way? We have some sins we do confess; but there is much at the bottom which is still right and good, and we therefore hope that we shall be delivered." I put you aside in God's name as unclean lepers. For you there is no hope, and no promise of salvation whatever. Here comes a second. "Sir, a month or two ago I would have claimed a righteousness with the very best of them. I, too, could have boasted of what I have done; but now I see my righteousness to be as filthy rags, and all my goodness is as an unclean thing. As for the future, I can make no promise; I have often promised, and so often lied. Lord, if ever I am made whole, Thy grace must make me so." III. Having thus brought the man before the priest, we shall now briefly turn our attention to THE CEREMONIES WHICH THE PRIEST USED IN THE CLEANSING OF THE LEPER. 1. You will perceive, first, that the priest went to the leper, not the leper to the priest. We go not up to heaven, first, till Christ comes down from His Father's glory to the place where we as lepers are shut out from God. Thou dost take upon Thyself the form of man. Thou dost not disdain the Virgin's womb; Thou comest to sinners; Thou eatest and drinkest with them! 2. But the coming of the priest was not enough, there must be a sacrifice, and on this occasion, in order to set out the two ways by which a sinner is saved, there was sacrifice mingled with resurrection. First, there was sacrifice. One of the birds was taken, and its blood was shed in a vessel which was full, as the Hebrew hath it, of "living water"—of water which had not been stagnant, but which was clean. Just as when Jesus Christ was put to death, blood and water flowed from His side to be "of sin a double cure," so in the earthen vessel there was received, first, the "living water" and then the blood of the bird which had just been slain. If sin is put away it must be by blood. There is no way of putting sin from before the presence of God except by the streams which flow from the open veins of Christ. The leper was made clean by sacrifice and by resurrection, but he was not clean till the blood was sprinkled on him. Christians, the Cross does not save us till Christ's blood is sprinkled on our conscience. Yet the virtual salvation was accomplished for all the elect when Christ died for them upon the tree. IV. THAT AFTER THE LEPER WAS CLEANSED, THERE WERE CERTAIN THINGS WHICH HE HAD TO DO. Yet, until he is cleansed, he is to do nothing. The sinner can do nothing towards his own salvation. His place is the place of death. Christ must be his life. The sinner is so lost that Christ must begin, and carry on, and finish all; but

when the sinner is saved then he begins to work in right good earnest. When once he is no more a leper, but a leper cleansed, then, for the love he bears his Master's name, there is no trial too arduous, no service too hard; but he spends his whole strength in magnifying and glorifying his Lord. I will not detain you further than to notice that this man, before he might further enjoy the privileges of his healed estate, was to bring an offering, and the priest was to take him to the very door of the Tabernacle. He never dare come there before, but he may come now. So the pardoned man may come right up to God's mercy-seat, and may bring the offering of holiness and good works. He is a pardoned man now. You ask me how? Not by anything he did, but by what the priest did, and that alone. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Leprosy, a special type of sin*:—I. In the first place, leprosy is undoubtedly selected to be a special type of sin, on account of ITS EXTREME LOATHSOMENESS. Beginning, indeed, as an insignificant spot, "a bright place," a mere scale on the skin, it goes on progressing ever from worse to worse, till at last limb drops from limb, and only the hideous mutilated remnant of what was once a man is left. II. BUT IT WILL BE REJOINED BY SOME: SURELY IT WERE GROSS EXAGGERATION TO APPLY THIS HORRIBLE SYMBOLISM TO THE CASE OF MANY WHO, ALTHOUGH INDEED SINNERS, UNBELIEVERS ALSO IN CHRIST, YET CERTAINLY EXHIBIT TRULY LOVELY AND ATTRACTIVE CHARACTERS (see Mark x. 21). But this fact only makes leprosy the more fitting symbol of sin. For another characteristic is its INSIGNIFICANT and often imperceptible beginning. We are told that in the case of those who inherit the taint, it frequently remains quite dormant in early life, only gradually appearing in later years. How perfectly the type, in this respect, then, symbolises sin! No comfort can be rightly had from any complacent comparison of our own characters with those of many, perhaps professing more, who are much worse than we. No one who knew that from his parents he had inherited the leprous taint, or in whom the leprosy as yet appeared as only an insignificant bright spot, would comfort himself greatly by the observation that other lepers were much worse; and that he was, as yet, fair and goodly to look upon. Though the leprosy were in him but just begun, that would be enough to fill him with dismay and consternation. So should it be with regard to sin. III. And it would so affect such a man the more surely, when he knew that the disease, however slight in its beginnings, was CERTAINLY PROGRESSIVE. This is one of the unfailing marks of the disease. And so with sin. No man can morally stand still. Sin may not develop in all with equal rapidity, but it does progress in every natural man, outwardly or inwardly, with equal certainty. IV. It is another mark of leprosy, that sooner or later it AFFECTS THE WHOLE MAN; and in this, again, appears the sad fitness of the disease to stand as a symbol of sin. For sin is not a partial disorder, affecting only one class of faculties, or one part of our nature. It disorders the judgment; it obscures the moral perceptions; it either perverts the affections or unduly stimulates them in one direction while it deadens them in another; it hardens and quickens the will for evil, while it paralyses its power for the volition of that which is holy. And not only Scripture, but observation itself, teaches us that sin, in many cases, also affects the body of man, weakening its powers, and bringing in, by an inexorable law, pain, disease, death. V. It is another remarkable feature of the disease that, as it progresses from bad to worse, the victim becomes MORE AND MORE INSENSIBLE. A recent writer says: "Though a mass of bodily corruption, at last unable to leave his bed, the leper seems happy and contented with his sad condition." Is anything more characteristic than this of the malady of sin? The sin which, when first committed, costs a keen pang, afterward, when frequently repeated, hurts not the conscience at all. Judgments and mercies, which in earlier life affected one with profound emotion, in later life leave the impenitent sinner as unmoved as they found him. VI. Another element of the solemn fitness of the type is found in THE PERSISTENTLY HEREDITARY NATURE OF LEPROSY. It may indeed sometimes arise of itself, even as did sin in the case of certain of the holy angels, and with our first parents; but when once it is introduced, in the case of any person, the terrible infection descends with unfailing certainty to all his descendants; and while, by suitable hygiene, it is possible to alleviate its violence, and retard its development, it is not possible to escape the terrible inheritance. Is anything more uniformly characteristic of sin? The most cultivated and the most barbarous alike, come into the world so constituted that, quite antecedent to any act of free choice on their part, we know that it is not more certain that they will eat than that, when they begin to exercise freedom they will, each and every one, use their moral freedom wrongly—in a word will sin. VII. And again, we find yet another analogy in the fact that, among the ancient Hebrews,

the disease was regarded as INCURABLE BY HUMAN MEANS; and, notwithstanding occasional announcements in our day that a remedy has been discovered for the plague, this seems to be the verdict of the best authorities in medical science still. That in this respect leprosy perfectly represents the sorer malady of the soul, every one is witness. No possible effort of will or fixedness of determination has ever availed to free a man from sin. Neither is culture, whether intellectual or religious, of any more avail. VIII. Last of all, this law teaches the supreme lesson, that as with the symbolic disease of the body, so with that of the soul—sin SHUTS OUT FROM GOD AND FROM THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE HOLY (see Rev. xxi. 27; xxii. 15). (S. H. Kellogg, D.D.)

Discipline in the Church:—1. Of the necessity and moderation of discipline in the Church. 2. That the discipline of the Church be advisedly exercised, not rashly precipitated. 3. Of the wholesome power left to the Church, of binding and loosing, and of obedience to be given thereunto. 4. The law declares men's sins, but does not heal them. 5. Of the diversity of censures in the Church. (A. Willet, D.D.)

Sin as a disease:—1. Sin the cause of diseases. 2. To take heed of the least sins. 3. Ministers to rebuke sin. 4. Not to go forward in sin. 5. Not to sin against the conscience. 6. Not to be swift to judge others. 7. To shun the company of the wicked. 8. Against pride in apparel. (Ibid.)

Leprosy:—Sin is a corrupting and disorganising disease, as well as a brutal degradation and hereditary uncleanness. It is a loathsome putrescence of the whole nature. It is a sickness of the whole head, and a faintness of the whole heart. Deliverance from it is called a cure and a healing, as well as a pardon. Notice its beginnings. Leprosy was, for the most part, hereditary. After doing its work in the parent it was very apt to break out in the child. Sin began in Adam, and having wrought nine hundred years in him he died; but the taint of it was left in all who sprang from him. But leprosy was not always hereditary. Hence the necessity of a special symbol on the subject of innate depravity, such as we have in the preceding chapter. The germ of all human sin is derived from our connection with a fallen parentage. But leprosy, whether hereditary, or contracted by contagion or otherwise, began far within. Its seat is in the deepest interior of the body. It is often in the system as many as three or a dozen years before it shows itself. How exactly this describes sin! Nero and Caligula were once tender infants, apparently the very personifications of innocence. Who that saw their sweet slumbers upon the bosoms of their mothers would ever have suspected that in those gentle forms were latent seeds which finally developed into bloody butchery, and tyranny, and vice, at which the world for ages has stood amazed! And little do we know of those depths of deceit which we carry in ourselves, or to what enormities of crime we are liable any day to be driven. The taint of leprosy is within, and nothing but watchfulness and grace can keep it from breaking out in all its corrosive and wasting power. 1. The first visible signs of leprosy are often very minute and inconsiderable, and not easily detected. A small pustule or rising of the flesh—a little bright red spot like that made by a puncture from a pin—a very trifling eruption, indentation, or scalliness of the skin—or some other very slight symptom, is usually the first sign which it gives of its presence. And from these small beginnings the whole living death of the leper is developed. How vivid the picture of the fact, that the worst and darkest iniquities may grow out of the smallest beginnings! A look of the eye, a desire of the heart, a thought of the imagination, a touch of the hand, a single word of compliance, is often the door of inlet to Satan and all hell's troops. 2. Leprosy is also gradual in its development. It does not break out in its full violence at once. Its first manifestations are so trifling that one who did not understand it would consider it nothing at all. No man is an outbreking and confirmed villain at once. People are shocked, and hold up their hands in horror at scandalous crimes; but they forget that these are only the easy sequences of little indulgences and sins of which they take no account. They need to be told that there is a close interior brotherhood and cohesion between sins, and that he who takes one to his favour is at once beset with all the rest. 3. Again, leprosy is in itself an exceedingly loathsome and offensive disorder—a kind of perpetual small-pox, only more deeply seated and attended with more inward corruption. 4. Again, leprosy under this law carried with it a most melancholy condemnation. A Jewish leper was not only horribly diseased, but also fearfully cursed in consequence of his disease. He was pronounced unclean by the law and by the priests. Such is the type, and it is the same with the antitype. Every sinner is condemned as well as diseased, and condemned for the very reason that he is diseased. There is a sentence of uncleanness and exclusion upon him. II.

has no fellowship with the saints, and no share in the holy services of God's people. He is a spiritual outcast—a moral leper—unclean, and ready for the realms of everlasting banishment and death. 5. And yet the picture is not quite complete. It remains to be said that there was no earthly cure for leprosy. The prophet of God, by his miraculous power, could remove it, but no human power or skill could. It was beyond the reach of physician or priest. And so it is with sin. It is a consumption which cannot be cured—a cancer which cannot be extracted—a leprosy which cannot be cleansed—except by the direct power of Divine grace. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*)

The gospel of the leprosy.—1. It is a work both difficult and weighty for people to discern and judge aright of their own spiritual condition. This appears by a'l these rules and directions. 2. It is the priest's office to judge of the leprosy. God has given His ministers power to retain and remit sins (*John xx. 23*). 3. Note the rules of trial, whereby the priest is to judge of the leprosy. (1) If it be but skin-deep, it is not the leprosy, he is clean; but if deeper, he is unclean (*vers. 3, 4, 20, 25, 30*). A child of God may have spots in his skin, frailties in his life; but his heart is sound. There are other sins rooted deep in the heart, that affect the vitals. (2) Does it stand at a stay, or does it spread further and further (*vers. 5-8, 23, 27, 28, 34, 36, 37*)? Evil men grow worse and worse: their corruptions gain ground upon them. But it is a sign there is some beginning of healing if it stand at a stay. If the Lord be healing a sinner, mortifying his lusts, he is clean. (3) If there be proud raw flesh in the rising, he is not to be shut up in suspense; the thing is evident (*vers. 9-11, 14, 15*). Pride, presumption, and impatience of reproof, are bad signs. (4) If all be turned white, a man is clean (*vers. 12, 17, 34*). (a) The natural reason. It is a sign of some inward strength of nature, that it expels the disease, and sends it forth to the outward parts. (b) The spiritual reason. A humble acknowledgment of the overspreading corruption of our nature, and flying to Christ for help under a thorough conviction and sense of our total uncleanness and pollutedness; this is a sign the plague is healed, and the leper made clean. (5) In case the leprosy be in the head, he is doubly unclean (*ver. 44*). Where sin has prevailed so far as to blind the very mind and understanding, men are more incapable of conversion than others, because so far from conviction. 4. Note the duties imposed upon the leper (*vers. 45-47*). (1) Rend clothes. Sign of sorrow and lamentation. (2) Bare head. (3) Cover lips to express shame. (4) Give warning to others to shun him. A scandalous sinner must not charge others with his failings, but load his own conscience, and take his guiltiness home to himself. (5) Dwell alone. Excommunication. (*S. Mather.*)

Avoidance of false suspicion.—When you read in the fourth verse of shutting up the parties for seven days, and then to look on it again, you may note with yourself, how greatly God hateth hasty, rash, and uncharitable judgment. A thing which many men and women, otherwise honest and good, are carried away withal, to their own great hurt, not only in soul, but in worldly reputation also, and to the bitter and biting discomfort of those whom they ought to love and judge well of. Nay, you may reason further with yourself thus: That if in a matter thus subject to the eye, as these sores were, yet God would have no haste, but a stay for seven days, and longer as occasion served, before any judgment should be given that the party was unclean. Oh, how much more doth He abhor haste and love leisure, in pronouncing of the hearts and thoughts of our friends and neighbours which are not seen, nor subject to an easy censure? (*Ep. Babington.*)

Sin may be invisible to human eyes.—A lady, whose portrait had often been successfully taken before, paid a visit one day to the photographer's for the purpose of having a new one taken. After she had sat for it in the usual way, the photographer retired with the plate to examine the picture which the sun's light had drawn there, but as the lines gradually developed in the chemical bath a strange sight was revealed. In the portrait the lady's face appeared covered with a number of dark spots; but yet no one looking at her that day was able to detect the slightest trace of them in her face! But the next day the explanation came. The spots had then become distinctly visible. The lady was ill of small-pox, of which she died. The faint yellow of the spots, some time before human eyes could discern it, had been marked by the pure light of the sun, and traced in darkened spots in that inexorably true picture drawn on the photographic plate, revealing the horrible disease that already, though as yet invisible to human eyes, was seated there. (*Biblical Treasury.*)

The importance of attending to the disease of sin.—Sin is an awful disease. I hear people say, with a toss of the head, and with a trivial manner: "Oh, yes, I'm a sinner." Sin is an awful disease. It is leprosy. It is dropsy. It is consumption. It is all moral disorders

in one. Now, you know there is a crisis in a disease. Perhaps you have had some illustration of it in your own family. Sometimes the physician has called, and he has looked at the patient and said: "That case was simple enough; but the crisis has passed. If you had called me yesterday, or this morning, I could have cured the patient. It is too late now; the crisis has passed." Just so it is in the spiritual treatment of the soul—there is a crisis. Before that, life. After that, death. Oh, as you love your soul, do not let the crisis pass unattended to. There are some here who can remember instances in life when, if they had bought a certain property, they would have become very rich. A few acres that would have cost them almost nothing were offered them. They refused them. Afterwards a large village or city sprang up on those acres of ground, and they see what a mistake they made in not buying the property. There was an opportunity of getting it. It never came again. And so it is in regard to a man's spiritual and eternal fortune. There is a chance; if you let that go, perhaps it never comes back. Certainly that one never comes back. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Leprosy and sin hereditary*:—Never shall I forget a visit which I paid to the leper hospital outside the East Gate of Damascus, which tradition says occupies the site of Naaman's house. A woman was crossing the courtyard, whose loathsome features seemed all but eaten away by disease. In her hands—the fingers of which were almost consumed by leprosy—she held a sweet-looking infant, as fair and pretty a child as one could desire to see. The contrast was most painful. Life and health and innocence seemed to sleep in the arms of sin, disease, and death. I said to the missionary who accompanied me, "Surely the woman is not the mother of the child?" He said, "Yes, she is"; the child does not show the leprosy now, but it is in the blood, and before long it will probably appear; and if the infant live long enough she will be as bad as the mother." Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? (*J. W. Bardsley.*) *Ministers must seek to produce conviction of sin*:—A devoted minister relates the following: "A friend of mine was visiting a dying carter, and said to him, 'My friend, do you feel yourself a sinner?' 'I do not know that I am,' was the reply; 'I suppose I am like other people; I do not feel very bad.' 'We must get that point settled,' said my friend. 'Let me ask you a few questions. Have you ever taken too much to drink?' 'Well, fellows like me, you know, are likely to do that now and then, out as we are in all weathers.' 'I am not asking you about the weathers, my question is, Have you done this?' 'Yes, I have.' 'Have you ever sworn?' 'Well, we carters are a rough lot, and a man's temper sometimes—' 'Stop! you admit that you have sworn, that you have cursed, and taken God's name in vain. Did you ever break the Lord's day?' 'Well, it would be difficult for us carters, busy as we are with our horses, to keep the Lord's day.' 'Stop! here are three things—drunkenness, profane swearing, and Sabbath-breaking—that you admit yourself guilty of. How can you say that you are not a sinner? You must take your place as a sinner, my friend; and the sooner you do it, the better.' He did so, and found mercy and pardon through the atoning blood of Christ." It is of no use for men to deny, or try to explain away, the fact of their sinfulness; they will never take their true place until they do so as sinners in the sight of God. *The difficulty of knowing aright one's true spiritual state*:—A young lady, who was under concern of soul, said to Dr. Nettleton: "I certainly do desire to be a Christian. I desire to be holy. I would give all the world for an interest in Christ." "What you say will not bear examination," said Dr. Nettleton. "If you really desire religion for what it is, there is nothing to hinder you from possessing it. I can make a representation which will show you your heart, if you are willing to see it." "I am," she replied. "It will look very bad," said Dr. N., "but if you are willing to see it, I will make the representation. Suppose you were a young lady of fortune; and suppose a certain young man should desire to possess your fortune, and should, for that reason, conclude to pay his addresses to you. But he does not happen to be pleased with your person. He does not love you, but hates you. And suppose he should come to you, and say, 'I really wish I could love you, but I do not. I would give all the world if I could love you; but I cannot.' What would you think of that young man?" We may readily guess the confusion and silence to which she was brought, by this faithful exposure of the deception which she had practised upon herself. (*Sword and Trowel.*) *Sinners ought to be willing to know their true state*:—A man once said this to Dr. Nettleton, "I sincerely desire to be a Christian. I have often gone to the house of God, hoping that something which should be said might be sent home to my mind by the Spirit of God, and be blessed to my salvation." "You are willing, then, are

you not," said Dr. N., "that I should converse with you, hoping that my conversation may be the means of your conversion?" "I am," was his reply. "If you are willing to be a Christian," added Dr. Nettleton, "you are willing to perform the duties of religion; for this is what is implied in being a Christian. Are you willing to perform these duties?" "I do not know but that I am," was the rather doubtful reply. "Well, then, you are the head of a family. One of the duties of religion is family prayer. Are you willing to pray in your family?" "I should be," he replied, "if I were a Christian; but it cannot be the duty of such a man as I am to pray. The prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord." "And is it not," said Dr. Nettleton, "an abomination unto the Lord to live without prayer? But just let me show you how you deceive yourself. You think you really desire to be converted. But you are not willing to be convicted. Just as soon as I mention a duty which you are neglecting, you begin to excuse and justify your-self, on purpose to keep your sin out of sight. You are not willing to see that it is an heinous sin to live in the neglect of family prayer. How can you expect to be brought to repentance until you are willing to see your sinfulness; and how can you flatter yourself that you really desire to be a Christian while you thus close your eyes against the truth?" (*Ibid.*) *A diseased nature*:—It is not necessary to split hairs over the doctrine of "original sin," nor to trip against stumblingblocks labelled "transmitted iniquity," in order to arrive at the conclusion that man as he is in this world needs moral helps. It was forcibly said, by way of illustration, that a wolf cub has probably never killed a sheep, but it undoubtedly will if it lives and has a chance—because it has the wolf nature. Man does not need to look outside of his own heart, if he be honest, to know that he has in his nature a tendency to sin—that he needs constraints around him and a new spirit within him to keep him true to the higher life. *Sin progressive*:—Amongst many other diseases that the body is incident unto, there is one that is called by the name of *gangrena*, which doth altogether affect the joints, against which there is no remedy but to cut off that joint where it settled, otherwise it will pass from joint to joint, till the whole body is endangered. Such is the nature of sin, which unless it be cut off in the first motion, it proceedeth unto action, from action to delectation, from delight unto custom, and from that unto habit, which being as it were, a second nature, is never, or very hardly removed without much prayer and fasting. (*J. Spencer.*) *The power of one sin*:—While I was walking in the garden one bright morning, a breeze came through and set all the flowers and leaves a-fluttering. Now, that is the way flowers talk, so I pricked up my ears and listened. Presently an old elder-tree said: "Flowers, shake off your caterpillars." "Why?" said a dozen altogether, for they were like some children who always say, "Why?" when they are told to do anything. Bad children, those! The elder said: "If you don't, they'll gobble you up." So the flowers set themselves a-shaking, till the caterpillars were shaken off. In one of the middle beds there was a beautiful rose, which shook off all but one, and she said to herself: "Oh, that's a beauty! I'll keep that one." The elder overheard her, and called out: "One caterpillar is enough to spoil you." "But," said the rose, "look at his brown and crimson fur and his beautiful black eyes, and scores of little feet. I want to keep him. Surely one won't hurt me." A few mornings after I passed the rose again. There was not a whole leaf on her; her beauty was gone, she was all but killed, and had only life enough to weep over her folly, while the tear stood like dewdrops on her tattered leaves. "Alas! I didn't think one caterpillar would ruin me!" "If the plague be turned into white, then the priest shall pronounce him clean":—At first sight it seems strange to ordain that the man should be reckoned clean if the leprosy were out upon him and covered him wholly. The reason, however, may be—1. Natural. 2. Moral. If natural, then it is either because the leprosy is not so infectious when it has thus come all out on the body, the hard, dry scurf not being likely to spread infection, whereas the ichor of raw flesh would (see *Baxter*); or, because it really is not a proper leprosy if it so come out—it is a salt humour cast out by the strength of the man's constitution, and is not deep-seated. It is rather a relief to the constitution; as when measles or small-pox come out to the surface of the body, recovery is hopeful. If it was for a moral reason, then it seems meant to teach that the Lord has a deep abhorrence of a corrupt nature—deeper far than merely of corrupt actions. We are ever ready to take home the guilt of evil deeds, but to palliate the evil of a depraved heart. But the Lord reverses the case. His severest judgment is reserved for inward depravity. And yet more. Is it not when a soul is fully sensible of entire corruption (as Isa. i. 5) that salvation is nearest? A complete Saviour for a complete

sinner? If there appeared any "raw flesh," then the man is unclean. For this indicates inward disease—not on the surface only. It is working into the flesh. But if the "raw flesh," turn and be "changed into white," then it is plain that the disease is not gone inwards; it is playing on the skin only. Let him stand, therefore, as clean. Perhaps the case of a pardoned man may be referred to again in this type. His iniquity comes all out to view, when it is thrown into the fountain opened; and the inner source of it is checked. The seat of corruption has been removed. But if, after the appearance of pardon, the man turn aside to folly (if "raw flesh" appear), he is to be counted unclean. If, however, this turning aside to folly be checked, if this backsliding be healed, then it is like the "raw flesh," turning "into white"—it evidences that his nature is sound—it has not returned to its state of thorough depravity. (A. A. Bonar.)

Unclean, unclean.—*The leper diseased*.—Leper, canst thou not read thy case here? Afflicted, exercised, tempted, downcast child of God, dost thou not see thy character here described by an inspired pen? 1. "The leper in whom the plague is." Is sin your plague? Take all your worldly anxieties, tie them up in one bundle, and put them into the scale; now place in the other scale the plague of sin. Which scale goes down? If you are a spiritual leper, you will say, "Oh, it is sin, sin, that I sometimes fear will be a millstone to drown my soul in hell." And canst thou find this mark, "the leper in whom the plague is"? Is not this a very striking expression, "In whom"? I think Paul has hit the matter to a nicety; and well he might, for he wrote as a man who knew what he was writing about; he says, "The sin that dwelleth in me." Sin is not like a martin that builds its nest under the eaves, which sticks to the house, but is not in the house. Neither is sin a lodger to whom you can give a week's or a month's notice to quit; nor is it a servant whom you may call up, pay him his month's wages, and send him about his business. No, no. Sin is one of the family who dwells in the house, and will not be turned out of the house—haunts every room, nestles in every corner, and like the poor ejected Irish of whom we read, will never leave the tenement while stick or stone hangs together. Is not this the case with you? Does not sin dwell in you, work in you, lust in you, go to bed with you, get up with you, and all the day long, more or less, crave, design, or imagine some evil thing? Do you feel sin to be a plague and a pest, as it must be to every living soul? Then are you not something of a leper if the plague dwell in you? 2. But the leper's clothes were to be rent. (1) This was a sign of mourning. Grief, sorrow, is their continual portion on account of the leprosy that is in them. (2) Rending the clothes was also a sign of abhorrence. Thus "the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy," when the Lord Jesus, in answer to his question, affirmed that He was the Son of God. (3) The rent clothes, therefore, of the leper show his self-abhorrence and self-loathing. Seeing the holiness and purity of God it is with him as with Job. "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." (4) The rent clothes was also a figure of a rent and contrite heart. "Rent your hearts," says the prophet, "and not your garments"; implying that though the rent garment was a figure of a rent heart, yet the outward mark was nothing without the inward feeling. 3. But the leper was also to have his head bare. No covering from God's wrath was allowed him; bareheaded he stood exposed to the winds and storms of heaven, bare before the lightning's flash. And does not this represent the poor sinner without a covering before God; sensible that he is amenable to God's justice and eternal indignation? 4. But he was also to have a covering on his upper lip. And this for the same reason that we cover the mouth of the grave—to prevent the infection of his breath. If he covered but the lower lip, the breath might come forth. Have you ever thought and felt that there was sin enough in your heart to infect a world? that if every man and woman in the world were perfectly holy, and you were left freely to give vent to every thought and imagination of your carnal mind, there was sin enough there to taint every individual? It is so, felt or not; for sin is of that infectious nature that there is enough in one man's heart to fill all London with horror. Oh, when a man knows this he is glad to have a covering for his upper lip! He cannot boast then of what a good heart he has, nor what good resolutions he has made, or what great performances he means to accomplish. He has at times a very Vesuvius in him, and wants no one to come within the mouth of the crater. If a man has a covering upon the upper lip he will not boast of his goodness. 5. But the leper was to have a cry in his mouth. That cry was "Unclean, unclean." It was a warning cry. He was to shout to the passengers, if any were

drawing near, "Unclean, unclean; come not near me; I am a leper; I shall pollute you; beware of my breath, it carries infection with it; touch me not; if you touch me you will be tainted with the same malady; beware of me; keep your distance; stand off!" Yes, but you say, "Come; I am not so bad as that; I am religious, and holy, and consistent. I am sure I need not cover my upper lip and cry, Unclean, unclean." Oh, no; certainly not. You are not a leper. You have had years ago a rising, or a boil, and at the priest's direction you have washed your clothes and are clean. But if you do not feel to be a leper, there are those who do; and such do cry, and ever must cry, "Unclean, unclean." And if they do not uncover all their sores to men, they can do so to God. 6. But all the days wherein the plague was in the leper he was to be defiled; he was unclean. Such is a spiritual leper; defiled by sin; polluted from head to foot, as long as the leprosy remains. 7. But what was the necessary consequence of this? "He shall dwell alone." A solitary religion is generally a good religion. God's tried people have not many companions. The exercised cannot walk with the unexercised; the polluted with the unpolluted; the sick with the well; the leper with the clean; for "how can two walk together except they be agreed?" (*J. C. Philpot.*) *Disease and sin*.—This great fact that a disease in the body was typical of a malady in the soul reminds us at once that there was perfect harmony between the body and the soul, between things spiritual and things temporal, between things heavenly and things earthly. There is enough of the harmony still surviving to show what and how rich it once was. The historical statement in this chapter is, that the leprosy overspread the whole body, till it became, in language used by one of the prophets, "white as snow"; the whole physical economy was infected with its deadly poison. And, in that respect, it was the type, and is indeed referred to in the New Testament as the type, of that sin which has infected the whole soul and body of mankind. Take any one faculty that is within us, and we shall find on it the great leprosy, or taint, or moral influence of sin. Man's intellect has in it still remaining energies that give token of what it once was; but it has in it also defects, and tremulousness, and weakness, and paralysis, that indicate that it is the subject of some great derangement. I need not attempt to prove that the heart also is defiled. Our blessed Lord gives the heart its faithful character when He says, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murder, adultery, and such like; and these are the things that defile a man." Truly, therefore, and justly did the Psalmist pray, "Create in me a clean heart, O God: renew a right spirit within me." But not only are the heart and intellect affected, as I have shown you, but the conscience also has suffered, and is poisoned by the universal disease. It is sometimes overflowed by guilty passions, it is sometimes silent when it ought to rebuke them; sometimes quiescent when it ought to assert its original authority, and sometimes the democracy of the passions rises in fierce array, dethrones the monarch that ought to govern them, and prompts man to pursue the infatuated course that leads to his ruin. And in the worst of cases this power of conscience is often perverted to the wrong side, sanctioning the sins which it ought to abhor. When the intellect that discerns, the heart that loves or hates, and the conscience that testifies what is right or wrong, are thus infected, truly may we say with Isaiah, "The whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint," &c. Were the tokens and the evidences of the assertion I have made not so obvious and so numerous as they actually are, you find other proofs in the miser fixing his heart upon gold, in spite of the decisions of intellect, the better impulses of the heart, and the rebukes of conscience. You find the drunkard still indulging in his cups, notwithstanding a thousand testimonies within and without, that he is ruining soul and body. You find the Pharisee robbing widows' houses, and making long prayers for a pretence. You find the very religion of love and truth corrupted into the religion of superstition, of hate, and a lie. So depraved and fallen is man that it looks that, if he had the power, he would turn redemption itself into a nullity, or into a curse. There is, then, on all sides the evidence of some great derangement. We never can suppose we were made so. Disease seems to us natural, but it is most unnatural; error, sin, hate, all seem to us normal and ordinary, but they are really altogether the reverse. We find, on tracing the similitude between the disease which is here mentioned, that the leper had to be insulated from the rest of the world, and left by himself to get rid of the disease that thus separated him. So the sinner, in God's moral government, must be forever separated from the communion and company of the holy, if he continue the subject of this great moral malady—sin. The leper's disease was so bad that it

was incurable by human means. It is so with sin. Like the leprosy, in the next place, sin is contagious. The characteristic disease of the Israelite spread from person to person, from house to house, and throughout the whole land. And who needs to be taught that "evil communications corrupt good manners"? Who needs to learn that there is in an evil word, in a crooked course, a contagious influence that is distilled upon susceptible and sensitive and living hearts? In the ancient economy, the party to whom the leper presented himself, was not the physician, as in other diseases, but the priest. And this shows that it was a disease in some shape intimately associated with man's guilt, or with sin. A Jew of old, like a Gentile now, if taken ill, applied to the physician; but when infected with this great typical disease, he did not go to the physician, but to the priest. But, more than this, even the priest could not heal him; the priest had no prescription that could heal him, no balm that could remove it. All that he could do was to say, "You are healed," or "You are not healed," or, "You are advancing towards convalescence," or the reverse. The priest was to pronounce him clean, or to pronounce him unclean. But how much better is the economy under which we live! Our High Priest can not only pronounce us clean, but make us clean; He can not only say that we are justified, but He can justify us by His perfect righteousness, forgive us by His atoning blood, by His sanctifying Spirit, through His inspired Word. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *The separating influences of sin:—*Any one who has visited Jerusalem may have seen the lepers standing day by day near the Jaffa Gate soliciting alms from those passing the threshold of the city which they themselves were not allowed to enter. Most travellers who have either witnessed this painful sight or visited the houses of the lepers at the Zion Gate must have recalled the words, "Without the camp shall his habitation be." No type so strikingly brings out the separating influences of sin as that of leprosy; telling the sinner, in no uncertain tones, that unless his sin be pardoned, his leprosy cleansed, he shall never enter the gates of the heavenly city. Howells, in one of his sermons, finely says that when Adam sinned, God, having locked the gate of Paradise to prevent the entrance of men, cast the key into the very depths of hell. There it lay, and man must for ever have been excluded—"without the camp," the place of God's dwelling, whether typified by garden, camp, or city, must his habitation have been—had not the Son of God, with His Father's will and pleasure, wrought our deliverance. As He stood on the edge of the fiery abyss—the wrath of God due to man's sin—He drew back. Again He looked into the terrible gulf. Then, with a love incomprehensible were it not Divine, He plunged into its depths, found the key, ascended upon high, led captivity captive, opened the gate of Paradise; and now the kingdom of heaven is open to all believers. (*J. W. Bardsley, M. A.*) *Leprosy outcasts in England:—*A gentleman visiting the venerable church of St. Mary's in the village of Minster, near Ramsgate, said to the guide, "What means this hole through the wall?" "That," replied the guide, "recalls a fact which is full of interest and pathos. In the twelfth century there were a number of lepers in the neighbourhood. You will understand, of course, that they were obliged to live by themselves, and were supported by charity. Over at the old Abbey you may still see the place where bread and other food was passed out to them. Being unclean, and afflicted with a horrible and incurable disease which was contagious, they were not allowed in church, or to come in contact with healthy persons, so they had no way of taking any direct part in the worship of God. Both as to soul and body they were driven out from all intercourse with the rest of mankind. Yet many of them longed for some sound or sight that might comfort them in their sad, loathsome, and hopeless condition. Taking pity on the poor creatures, the monks made this hole in the wall, so that, one at a time, they could see the priests ministering at the altar, hear the music, and perhaps a few words of the Mass. Then they would go back to their huts and caves, trusting that in heaven, if not on earth, they might be free from the dreadful curse under which they suffered. That is why this hole is called the Leper's Squint. Poor outcasts! my heart aches to think of them, though they are all dead and gone these seven hundred years."

Vers. 47–59. **Leprosy in a garment.**—*The leprosy of garments:—*I do not suppose that this leprosy of garments and skins was just the same disease of that name which attacked the human system. It may have been; and one may have sometimes taken it from the other; but we are not required to take this view. It is enough to understand it to be some affection of woven fabrics bearing a general resemblance

to a leprous affection of the living body. As the life and comeliness of the leper are fretted away by his disease, so clothes and skins are affected by dampness, mould, or the settling in them of animalculæ, fretting away their strength and substance. Michaelis, who very thoroughly investigated this whole subject, speaks of dead wool, that is, the wool of sheep which have died by disease, as particularly liable to damage of this sort. His explanation is, that it loses its points and breeds impurity; and that when made into cloth and warmed by the natural heat of the wearer, it soon becomes bare and falls in holes, as if eaten by some invisible vermin. The unsoundness and unhealthiness of fabrics made of such materials were thought so serious by this learned investigator, that he strongly urges the interference of legal enactments to prohibit the use of such wool in the manufacture of cloths. It is evidently to some such affections that God refers in these laws concerning the leprosy of garments; not because they were so particularly noxious or dangerous, but for typical purposes. The proper vindication of all these ceremonial regulations is their lively signification of moral and religious ideas. We have seen that leprosy in the living body represents sin as it lives and works in man. Leprosy in clothing must therefore refer to disorder and contagion around man. There is disease, breeding in everything about us, as well as in us. Jude speaks of "the garment spotted by the flesh." Christ commends a few names in Sardis because they had "not defiled their garments." The reference in these and like passages plainly is to the matter of external contact with the world, and to the liability of Christians to be tainted by their earthly surroundings. The phraseology, however, is borrowed from these ancient laws. It contemplates the associations of a man as his clothing. Morally speaking, the state of things in which we live is our garment. It is that which is put upon us when we come into life, which we continually wear while in the world, and which we put off when we die. It includes all the circumstances in which we are placed, the business in which we engage, the social systems under which we act, our comforts and associations in the world, and all the outward every-day occurrences which enter into and shape our external existence. You will notice that these laws do not prohibit, but rather enjoin, the use of clothing. Toil is good; and family relations are good; and society in all its complex and varied affairs is good. We cannot sever ourselves from anything which it imposes without interference with God and detriment to ourselves. But whilst all these natural surroundings are good, they are liable to disease, and may become the sources of infection and evil. They may become tainted, and so help to render us unclean. Society is as capable of corruption as the individual; and with this augmentation of mischief, that it reacts upon the individual, and may contaminate and deprave him still more than he would otherwise be. The fact is, that our social factors have introduced a great deal of dead wool into the fabrics which men in this world are compelled to wear. Take the subject of government. Civil rule is ordained of God. It is meant for good. And when framed upon principles of righteousness, earth knows no higher blessing. It is a defence for the weak, a restraint upon outbreaching passion, a handmaid to social dignity, the bulwark of freedom, the grand regulator of the outward world. And yet, how leprous has government often become! What curses has it inflicted upon man! It has been breeding leprosy and plague for six thousand years. And not the least among its dreadful contaminations has been its deleterious effects upon the virtue of mankind. An arbitrary and tyrannical government cripples and stunts morality in its very germ, by divesting goodness of its proper reward, and making justice yield to the bribes of power and gain. It makes outward authority or sordid passion, instead of inward conviction and moral principle, the rule of conduct. Take the domestic relations. God saw that it was not good for the man to be alone. He has set mankind in families. He has ordained the home, and made it the seat and centre of the mightiest influences that work in society. Yet, how often may we find the leprous plague fretting into the warp and woof of the domestic fabric, and forming a moral atmosphere about the plastic souls of infancy and childhood, more awful than upas shades and more desolating than Lybian siroccos! Take business. It is necessary to engage in it. God himself commands it. Virtue, and religion, and even earthly comfort, require it. But how liable to become corrupt, and a mere instrument of death. The commercial world is a very trying world upon the health of honour and honesty. Take education and literature. We must have schools and books. They are an indispensable part of the great machinery of human progress. But they are apt to become leprous, and to impart contagion. Oh, what a power of mischief has gone out upon the world from schools and books.

How has Genius descended from the altars of Heaven, to light her torch at the flames below! Dead wool is in much of the cloth she wears. Take even the Church. By it redemption is conveyed to men; and outside of it man has no Saviour and no hope. And yet it is one of those garments around us which are liable to leprous taint. Instead of serving as a house of prayer, it has sometimes been a mere den of thieves. Instead of a nursery of faith, hope, and charity, it has often been a nest for pestilential superstition, narrow self-righteousness, and intolerant bigotry. But I need not enter further into specifications of this sort. You can see plainly that nothing around us in this world is so holy or so good but that it may be perverted to base uses, and rendered the instrument of contamination and exclusion from the camp of God's saints. And whilst we continue upon the earth, not one of us shall ever be able to escape liability to become leprous from the social influences which hang upon and beset us continually. Having thus looked at the disorder, let us now direct our attention to the prescriptions concerning it. 1. The first thing I notice here is that God set every Israelite on the lookout for it. This must necessarily have been the direct effect of the announcement of these laws. Every article of clothing was at once thrown under suspicion. Now there is a kind of suspiciousness which I would not encourage. There is an affection arising from a bad conscience or a bad heart—a feeling closely akin to ugly jealousy, which mistrusts everything and everybody. It is just the contrary of that charity which "believeth all things, hopeth all things." And the farther any one can keep himself from it the better for his own comfort, and for the good of those around him. But there is a suspiciousness which is good. It mingles with the deepest piety and goes along with the greatest usefulness. But it is a suspicion of self rather than a suspicion of others. It is a jealousy for one's own purity—a holy fear of doing wrong or of being led into evil. It is a diligent watchfulness over self—a careful guarding against the contaminations of evil. It is a suspiciousness based upon the clear evidence that everything is liable to corruption, and that there is continual danger of falling into condemnation. It is a sacred dread of sin—the desire of a pure heart to "keep unspotted from the world." It sets a man upon the lookout for dangers in all his earthly surroundings. 2. A second particular in this law, to which I will call your attention, is, that whenever any symptoms appeared which might perhaps be leprous, the case was always to be immediately submitted to the judgment of the priest. The priest typified Christ; and his office, the office of Christ. And a great Christian lesson here comes to our view. Human judgment is weak. The wisest of men has said, "He that trusteth to his own heart is a fool." We need light from heaven. Jesus is the only reliable arbiter. There are many instances in which nothing can guide us safely but His own decisive Word. And this law pointed forward to the fact that Christ is our Teacher and Judge—that He is to be our authoritative Instructor—and that by His decision we are to know what is not pure. 3. A third particular in these laws relates to the treatment which a garment declared to be leprous was to receive. This varied somewhat with the nature of the symptoms. If the affection was active and rapid in its progress, the article was at once to be burned, "whether warp or woof, in woollen or in linen, or anything of skin." It mattered not how valuable the article was, or how great the inconvenience of its loss, it was to be destroyed by fire. We are bound, as Christians, at once to cut loose for ever from everything infected. If the affection, however, was not active and fretting, remedial measures were to be adopted, if possible, to cleanse and save the garment. The natural remedy for defilement was to be applied. And here comes in the whole subject of reform. This is the natural remedy for all manageable social disorders. I say all manageable ones; for as some garments were so badly affected as to be doomed at once to burning, so there are some infections in the surroundings of man in this world which never can be healed. Take, for instance, some of our popular amusements. That they are leprous none will deny. What hope is there of reforming them? Theirs is "a fret inward," and there is no help for them. No washing can get them clean. And the only alternative for Christians is to separate themselves from them entirely. These, and such like infected articles, are past cleansing. But there are others in which the taint is less malignant and less defiling. These are the legitimate subjects of Christian reform. There are many abuses in society which may be corrected. To this end, therefore, are our energies to be directed. But there is one very important peculiarity to be observed in all Christian reforms. The washing of the infected garment was to be done by direction of the priest. "The priest shall command that they wash the thing wherein the plague is."

Christ's Word is to be our guide for getting rid of social disorders, as well as for the detection of them. He is our Priest, and we must conduct our cleansing efforts upon the basis of His gospel. Finally, along with the washing of a leprous garment, it was to be shut up seven days, after which the priest was to examine it again; and if the bad symptoms had disappeared it was to be washed again, and it was clean; but if the symptoms had not disappeared, it was then to be finally torn or burned. A vivid picture, this, of God's plans with the social fabrics of this world. Some, in which the disorder was great, have already been quite destroyed. Others, in which the affection is less malignant, are undergoing the efforts of purification. They are shut up now until time shall complete its period. The great High Priest and Judge shall then come forth to give them the last inspection. And as things then are, so shall their eternal portion be. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *The diffusiveness of sin*:—We are told that one grain of iodine will give colour to seven thousand times its own weight of water, and one grain of poisoned literature will give a colouring to all the threescore and ten years of a man's life, and to his character and power, we know not to what extent. Lord Shaftesbury speaks of it as poison. He reminds me of an incident that occurred in a town in which I lived and laboured. In the manufacture of some lozenges, arsenic, instead of some comparatively harmless compound, had been mixed up, and they were sold in the market. It was ascertained, in the course of a day or two after, what had been done, and all who had purchased them were warned. Many had bought them and died at the time, and a panic of grief spread through the town. But there were some who did not die; it did not kill them; but they never lived—that is, there was no real life about them; the very fountain of their life-blood was poisoned, and you could tell by the pallid cheek, and the lack-lustre eye, and the feeble brain, and the sluggish existence that it was not life. They were young as to years, some of them, but half-palsied, and feeble and old—they were poisoned. Oh, there are men and women living in this London to-day whom the poison of literature has not killed altogether, and still they are not living; the very fountain of their life is poisoned, and they carry it about with them, and bear its curse within them; and still wherever you go you see it. (*J. P. Chown.*)

CHAPTER XIV.

VERS. 2-32. The law of the leper in the day of his cleansing.—*Cleansing the leper*:—I. THE DISEASE. 1. Its peculiar designation. Leprosy the "plague of boils" (Deut. xxviii.), which applies very forcibly to sin. 2. Its distinguishing characteristics. Small in appearance; so in a vicious course of life. It gradually spread, as does sin spread over all the powers and faculties of a man. 3. Its pernicious consequences. The malady was injurious to society, as being infectious and pernicious; to the person himself, excluding him from all society, civil and religious. So sinners corrupt others, while their abominable ways shut them from the communion of the faithful. II. THE CURE OF THE DISEASE. 1. No human means could be availing. The leper would gladly have cured himself. No art of man was effectual (2 Kings v. 7). We have no remedy of man's devising for sin (Rom. vii. 19, 24). 2. If the leper was cured, it was by God alone, without the intervention of human means (Luke xvii. 14; Isa. li. 7). Nothing was prescribed or attempted for the removal of this distemper. And none but God can remove sin, &c. (Rom. vii. 10, 18; Eph. v. 9; 1 Pet. ii. 2). 3. But the cure was associated with blood and water. And to be cleansed from the leprosy of sin we must have applied the blood and spirit of Christ (1 John i. 7; Ezek. xxxvi. 25). III. THE CONFIRMATION OF THE CURE BY THE PRIEST. 1. A person was not to be pronounced clean on a sudden. The priest was to use much caution and deliberation. Caution should be exercised by ministers and office-bearers in the Church towards those who are candidates for fellowship. 2. When it evidently appeared that soundness had been imparted to his disordered body, this was declared with due solemnity. Here we see the pre-eminence of our High Priest; for while the priest merely declared the leper healed, He most effectually heals. Let those infected with the leprosy apply to their souls the Divinely appointed remedy; and let those who have been cleansed from it carefully discharge the duty enjoined on them. (ver. 10, &c.). (*W. Sleight.*) *The leper*:—1. How God is the Author of plagues and diseases. Not

to hurt man, but to help him; for man being afflicted, is humbled; being humbled, he runs to Him who can raise him up. 2. That sin infects men's bodies, garments, and houses. 3. Of the office of ministers, in visiting the sick (ver. 44). 4. Of our cleansing by the blood of Christ. 5. Of the honourable calling of physicians. They should be—(1) Skilful. (2) Faithful to their patient. (3) Religious, referring all to God's glory. (4) Not covetous. (*A. Willet, D.D.*) *Lessons*:—1. Regeneration must be total in every part. That vicious persons be not with too great facility reconciled. 3. God accepts of our obedience according to our heart. 4. To give thanks to God for our health. (*Ibid.*) *The leper cleansed*:—Although leprosy was not curable by human remedies, it did not always continue for life. It was often sent as a special judgment, as in the cases of Miriam, Azariah, and Gehazi. The Jews generally looked upon it in this light. Its very name denotes a stroke of the Lord. This of itself rather implies that it may cease with the repentance and forgiveness of the smitten offender. It was the anticipation of the healing, of at least some persons leprously affected, that formed the basis of the provisions here laid down. They constitute "the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing"; and if there was no possibility of cure, there was no use of this law. You will observe, however, that these regulations were not for the *cure* of the leper, but for his ceremonial cleansing *after* the cure. The disease had first to be stayed, and then began this process of cleansing off all its lingering effects and disabilities. I therefore take the deepest intention of these rites to be to illustrate the nature of sanctification. Justification is also implied, but only as connected with sanctification. 1. In the first place, it is presupposed that the leper's disease had been stayed. And this healing again points to some putting forth of Divine power and grace quite different from anything here brought to view, and far anterior to the commencement of these services. The first motion of our salvation is from God. It begins while we are yet in the very depths of our defilement and guilt. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." A full and free forgiveness of all our sins is provided. And the only remaining requirement is to "go show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded." 2. The leper, finding his leprosy stayed, was to go to the judge in the case and claim exemption from the sentence that was upon him. And to render this the more easy for him, the priest had to "go forth out of the camp" to meet him. The very moment the sinner believes in the healing proclaimed to him in the gospel, and sets himself to move for his cleansing, Christ meets him. 3. And when the healed leper thus presented himself to the priest, there was no alternative left. He had to be pronounced cured. And so Christ hath bound Himself to acquit and absolve every sinner who thus comes to Him in the strength of the gospel message. There is no further hindrance in the way. The man is justified. The sentence that was against him is rescinded and taken away. But the mere absolution of the priest did not fully restore the leper. Though his disease was stayed, there was a taint of it remaining to be purged off before he could join the camp or the holy services. And so our whole salvation must miscarry if it does not also take in an active holiness, purifying our hearts and lives, and transforming us into the image of our Redeemer. How this sanctification is effected is what we are now to consider. I. To cleanse the recovered leper, the first thing to be done was THE PROCUREMENT OF TWO CLEAN BIRDS, THE ONE OF WHICH WAS TO BE SLAIN, AND THE OTHER TO BE DIPPED IN ITS FELLOW'S BLOOD AND SET AT LIBERTY. These two doves, the gentlest of all God's creatures, at once carry our thoughts back to Christ and His wonderful history. The fate of the one shows us how He was mangled for human guilt, crushed to death for the sins of others, and brought down to the depths of the earth. The other, coming up out of the earthen vessel, out of the blood of its fellow, shows us how Jesus rose again from the rocky sepulchre, and ascended up out of the hand of His captor on strong and joyous pinions far into the high abodes of heaven, scattering as He went the gracious drops of cleansing and salvation. The introduction of these birds, in this connection, presents a great theological fact. As they typify Christ, they show that our sanctification, as well as our justification, proceeds from His Cross and resurrection. II. The next thing to be done for the cleansing of the recovered leper was THE ARRANGEMENT AND USE OF MEANS TO APPLY THE CLEANSING OF BLOOD. Christ has appointed certain instruments and agencies to convey to us the purifying elements. First of all is the cedar stem of His Word, durable, fragrant, and instinct with celestial power and life, speaking through all the visible creation, but much more distinctly and powerfully in the written Scriptures. Along with this, and fastened to it, is the scarlet wool of the holy sacraments, absorbing, as it were, the

whole substance of Christ crucified, and performing an important part in the impartation of the same to our souls. And along with this scarlet wool, and bound to the same stem, are the many little aromatic stems of prayer, with the sanctifying blood running out and hanging in drops on every point, ready to flow upon and cleanse the humble worshipper. III. A third requirement for the leper's cleansing was, THAT HE SHOULD "WASH HIS CLOTHES, AND SHAVE OFF ALL HIS HAIR, AND WASH HIMSELF IN WATER." This was his own work. It was to be done by the leper himself. Its spiritual significance is easily understood. It refers to the sinner's repentance and reformation. He must cleanse himself from all his old and base surroundings. He must separate between himself and everything suspicious. IV. But there is another particular entering into this ritual cleansing. After everything else had been done, SACRIFICES WERE TO BE OFFERED. We must wash, and repent, and reform; but it avails nought without blood. Water, the purest that ever dropped from mossy rock, or gushed from the mountain spring, is not able to cleanse a man for heaven. Tears of repentance, though pure as those which trickled down the Saviour's cheeks, cannot wash out the stains of sin, except they be mingled with the blood that dripped from His wounds. And no moral improvements can entitle us to eternity's honours if they are not connected with the suretyship and sacrifice of Jesus. The source of all sanctification is in His death and resurrection. All the glories of eternal life still refer us back to Calvary. Grace in Christ Jesus commenced the work, and grace in Christ Jesus must complete it. The only peculiarity which I notice here is that some of the blood and oil was to be touched to the cleansed leper, the same as in the consecration of the priests. It points to the very culmination and crown of Christian sanctity. The blood of the trespass-offering stands for the blood of Christ, and the holy oil for the Holy Spirit. These are the two great consecrating elements of Christianity. With these our High Priest approaches us through the gospel, to complete our cleansing and ordain us to the dignities and duties of our spiritual calling. V. There is one point more in these ceremonies to which I will call your attention. I refer to THE TIME WHICH THEY REQUIRED. A leper could by no possibility get through with his cleansing under seven days. One day was enough to admit him into the camp; but seven full days were requisite to admit him to his home. There was therefore a complete period of time necessary to the tirelessness of his cleansing. This arrangement was not accidental. It has its full typical significance. It refers to the fact that no one is completely sanctified in the present life; and that a complete period of time must ensue before we reach the rest to which our cleansing entitles us. We have attained unto very high honours. We have secured very exalted privileges. But everything has not yet been done, and all our disabilities are not yet removed. Great services yet remain to take place when the seven days have elapsed. And until then we must patiently wait. The influences of sin still linger about the old tenement, and we must suffer the consequences of it until the term of this present dispensation ends. Then shall our High Priest come forth again, and "change our vile bodies, and fashion them like unto His own glorious body." The last lurking-places of defilement shall then be cut off. The last act of the leper's cleansing was to shave off his hair. When that was done he entered upon all the high services of the Tabernacle, and went to his home a saved man. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *Ceremonies on recovery of the leper*.—First of all, "he shall be brought unto the priest; and the priest shall go forth out of the camp," and see him; and then the priest, when he finds that he is clean, shall pronounce him clean. Next the priest was to take "two birds alive and clean, and cedar-wood and scarlet, and hyssop: and the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water." Now it seems absurd to speak of an earthen vessel, and water in it called "running water." But all the absurdity is taken away when we recollect that the original is "living water." It is the same expression that occurs in other parts of Scripture. "I will give unto him living water"—"It shall be in him a well of living water." And the real meaning of this passage is "fresh water" from the fountain, and not stagnant, and unfit for physical, or for spiritual, or for ecclesiastical purposes. Then it has been supposed that the one bird that was slain was meant to describe the death of Christ; and the dismissal of the other bird, after being dipped in the blood of the slain bird, was meant to be a type and prefiguration of the resurrection. It is nowhere in Scripture said to be so, but it is obviously typical of sacrifice; and no one sacrifice, no one symbol, could set forth the completeness of the work of Christ; and therefore many symbols may have been employed and combined to set forth that great and blessed act. We read, then, that the person, after this, was still

to present an offering of "two he-lambs, without blemish"; and to remain at the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation till the priest had offered these; and by this he was to have access to the congregation. We read that the priest was to sprinkle him seven times; that is, completely, the number meant to denote perfection. He was also to touch the tip of his right ear, to denote that that ear should be opened only to all that was pure. He was also to touch the thumb of the right hand, to teach that every act was to be consistent with his character. And upon the right foot, to show that he was to walk in God's ways, which are ways of pleasantness and of peace. So that the man should feel—what is stated by the apostle in Rom. xii.—that he was to present himself, soul and body, a living sacrifice, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Now the language employed here—the hyssop, and the cedar-wood, and the sprinkling—casts light upon many passages in the Psalms, and those passages, again, cast light upon the phraseology of the New Testament. "Ye are come unto the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus." We read again, in another passage, of "the sprinkling of His blood," the "blood of sprinkling." The meaning of that is, just as the life of the turtle dove, the lamb, or the bird, was sacrificed by the shedding of its blood, and typically and ecclesiastically, or Levitically, virtue or qualification was imparted to the person related to it; so the efficacy of Christ's death, represented by His blood—that is, the atoning efficacy of it—is to be applied so to our hearts and consciences that we may have peace with God, free pardon of our sins, and the hope of an inheritance among all them that are sanctified. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *Do not forget the remedy*:—Cecil had been a great sufferer for years, and none of his medical friends had been able to ascertain the cause. At length Mrs. Cecil was told of a physician who was extremely skilful in intricate cases, and whom she entreated him to consult. On entering the physician's room, he said, "Welcome, Mr. Cecil; I know you well by character, and as a preacher. We must have some conversation after I have given you my advice." Mr. Cecil then described his sufferings. The physician considered a moment, and then said, "Dear sir, there is only one remedy in such a case as yours; do first try it; it is perfectly simple," and then he mentioned the medicine. Mr. Cecil, fearing to occupy too much of his time, rose to leave, but the physician said, "No, sir, we must not part so soon, for I have long wished for an opportunity of conversing with you." So they spent half an hour more, mutually delighted with each other's society. On returning home, Mr. Cecil said to his wife, "You sent me to a most agreeable man—such a fund of anecdote, such originality of thought, such a command of language." "Well, but what did he prescribe for you?" Mrs. Cecil anxiously inquired. There was a pause, and then Mr. Cecil exclaimed, "I have entirely forgotten the remedy; his charms of manner and conversation put everything else out of my mind." "Now, young men," said Mr. Cecil, "it will be very pleasant for you if your congregations go away saying, 'What eloquence! what original thought! and what an agreeable delivery!' Take care they do not forget the remedy, the only remedy, Christ and His righteousness, Christ and His atonement, Christ and His advocacy." (*Memoir of Wm. Marston.*) *The cured and uncured*:—Christ cured the demoniac, the paralytic, the leper. He took the most chronic and complicated diseases, and they could not stand before His fiat. To one He said, "Be thou clean"; to another He said, "Take up thy bed and walk"; to another, "Damsel, arise"; and all these were not only cured as to the body, but cured as to the sicknesses of the soul. A pastor went into the house where there was a young Christian dying in great triumph. He entered the room to congratulate her as she was about to enter heaven, and as he went into the room and began to talk cheerfully about the joys that were immediately before her, her sister left the room. A few weeks after the pastor was called to the same house, and this sister who had left the room was about to take her departure into the eternal world, but she was not ready. She said to the pastor, "You don't remember me, do you?" "Oh, yes," he replied, "I remember you." "Do you remember when you were talking to my sister about heaven I left the room?" "Yes," he said, "I remember that." She said, "Do you know why I left?" "No," he replied, "I don't." "Well," she said, "I didn't want to hear anything about my soul, or about heaven, and now I am dying. Oh, sir, it is a dreadful thing to die!" Now, what was the difference between those two sisters? The one was perfectly cured of the terrible disease of sin, the other was not. (*T. De Witt Talmage.*) *Christ the only Healer*:—Now, children, if my watch has lost its mainspring, where shall I go to get it mended? To the tailor's? No. To the blacksmith's? No. To the watchmaker's? Yes. Why? Because he makes watches, and knows how to mend them. Now, if your hearts are bad, where will

you go to have them healed? To your parents? No. To the priest? No. To Jesus Christ? Yes. Why? Because He made the heart, and knows how to heal it. (*The Church Scholars' Magazine.*) *Christ is an Almighty Doctor*:—Christ is an Almighty Doctor. At midnight a sudden disease comes upon your little child. You hasten for a physician, or you telegraph for the doctor as soon as you can, and hour after hour there is a contest between science and the King of Terrors. And yet you stand there and you watch and you see the disease is conquering fortress of strength after fortress of strength, until after a while you stand over the lifeless form and have to confess that there is a limit beyond which human medicament cannot go. But I hail at this moment an Almighty Doctor, who never lost a patient. Why, a leper came out with a bandage over his mouth and utterly loathsome, so they drove him out from all society, and when he came out the people all ran, and Christ ran. But Christ ran in a different direction from the people. They all ran away from the poor man; Christ ran towards him. And then a second leper came out with a bandage over his mouth, and a third, and a fourth, and so on until there were ten lepers, and I see Christ standing among them. It is a dangerous experiment, you say. Why, if you caught the breath of one such man as that, it would be certain death. There, sublimely great in goodness, Christ stood among the ten lepers, and He cured the first, and the second, and the tenth. (*T. De Witt Talmage.*) *Christ can remove the root of the disease of sin*:—Some time ago a man wished to cut down a tree in his garden, and took it in hand to do it himself. Taking a spade, he cleared away the earth from the roots, and laid them bare for the axe. He hewed all the roots and suckers he saw, and then pushed and pulled at the tree, but it remained as firm as ever. Going to his gardener, he consulted him about it, and his reply was, "Ah, sir, you have not cut the tap-root. You may hack and cut away at all the rest of the roots, but unless you cut it the tree will never fall." There are hundreds of sin-sick souls who persist in pruning away this sin and that sin, but they wilfully refuse to cut the tap-root of sin. **Two birds.**—*The two birds considered typically*:—I. In the first bird let us see the SAVIOUR. 1. The bird was to be "clean." Christ perfectly holy. 2. A bird's being chosen in this rite may point us whence our Saviour came—from heaven. 3. The bird was slain. Christ tasted death for us. This shows—(1) The evil of sin. (2) The certainty of its punishment. (3) God's unspeakable love. 4. As to what bird it was, we do not certainly know, but commentators tell us all the birds prescribed by Moses were common and accessible. So the Saviour is not far off, but near at hand. 5. The "earthen vessel" reminds us of the Saviour's humanity. And the fact that it contained not only blood but also clear water, may remind us that He saves by His Spirit as well as by His blood—that His salvation includes sanctification as well as justification. II. Let us see in the other bird the BELIEVER. 1. That the Christian is represented by a bird, just as the Saviour is, may teach us—(1) That Jesus in some sense makes the Christian equal to Himself; and (2) That every Christian should seek to be Christlike (see 1 John iii. 4). 2. That the Christian is represented by a clean bird teaches—(1) That the man who believes is justified from all things; and (2) That the Christian's effort should ever be after cleanness of character as well as of condition. 3. That this bird was dipped in the blood of the slain bird shows us plainly the way of salvation—by faith. 4. That the bird on being dipped was then let loose into the open field, teaches the blessed freedom, the glorious change which immediately takes place on a man's believing. 5. May we not also learn that while the Christian is free, yet he will always use his liberty as the bird does, not to sink earthward, but to soar heavenward? III. As the living bird seems to have been dipped into the blood of the dead by means of a cedar staff, to which, along with a bundle of hyssop, it was attached by a band of scarlet wool, we take this staff as a representation of the GOSPEL, through the foolishness of preaching which it pleases God to save them who believe. Doing so, we learn from 1 Kings iv. 30, that cedar-wood and hyssop were regarded as the two extremes of vegetable creation; and so the gospel is (1) adapted to the two extremes of men; (2) addressed to the highest and lowest; (3) to the best and the worst. (*D. Jamison, B.A.*) *The two birds*:—As in all the Levitical types, so in this case, at the very entrance on the redeemed life stands the sacrifice of a life, and the service of a priest as mediator between God and man. Blood must be shed if the leper is to be admitted again into covenant standing with God; and the blood of the sacrifice in the law ever points to the sacrifice of Christ. But that great Sacrifice may be regarded in various aspects. Sin is a many-sided evil, and on every side it must be met. As often repeated, because sin as guilt requires expiation,

hence the type of the sin-offering; in that it is a defrauding of God of His just rights from us, satisfaction is required, hence the type of the guilt-offering; as it is absence of consecration, life for self instead of life for God, hence the type of the burnt-offering. And yet the manifold aspects of sin are not all enumerated. For sin, again, is spiritual death; and, as death, it involves corruption and defilement. It is with special reference to this fact that the work of Christ is brought before us here. In the clean bird, slain that its blood may be applied to the leper for cleansing, we see typified Christ, as giving Himself, that His very life may be imparted to us for our life. In that the blood of the bird is mingled with water, the symbol of the Word of God, is symbolised the truth, that with the atoning blood is ever inseparably united the purifying energy of the Holy Ghost through the Word. Not the water without the blood, nor the blood without the water, saves, but the blood with the water, and the water with the blood (1 John v. 6). But the type yet lacks something for completeness; and for this reason we have the second bird, who, when by his means the blood has been sprinkled on the leper, and the man is now pronounced clean, is released and flies away heavenward. What a beautiful symbol of that other truth, without which even the atonement of the Lord were nought, that He who died, having by that death for us procured our life, was then released from the bonds of death, rising from the dead on the third day, and ascending to heaven, like the freed bird, in token that His life-giving, cleansing work was done. Thus the message which, as the liberated bird flies carolling away, sweet as a heavenly song, seems to fall upon the ear is this (Rom. iv. 25). (*S. H. Kellogg, D.D.*) *The two birds*:—There is nothing more suggestive than a caged bird. In the down of its breast you can see the glow of southern climes. In the sparkle of its eyes you can see the flash of distant seas. In its voice you can hear the song it learned in the wild wood. It is a child of the sky in captivity. 1. Now the dead bird of my text, captured in the air, suggests the Lord Jesus, who came down from the realms of light and glory. He once stood in the sunlight of heaven. He was the favoured of the land. He was the King's Son. But one day there came word to the palace that an insignificant island was in rebellion, and was cutting itself to pieces with anarchy. I hear an angel say: "Let it perish. The King's realm is vast enough without the island. The tributes to the King are large enough without that. We can spare it." "Not so," said the Prince, the King's Son; and I see Him push out one day, under the protest of a great company. He starts for the rebellious island. He lands amid the execrations of the inhabitants, that grow in violence until the malice of earth has smitten Him, and the spirits of the lost world put their black wings over His dying head and shut the sun out. The hawks and vultures swooped down upon this dove of the text, until head and breast and feet ran blood—until, under the flocks and beaks of darkness the poor thing perished. No wonder it was a bird taken and slain over an earthen vessel of running water. It was a child of the skies. It typified Him who came down from heaven in agony and blood to save our souls. 2. I notice also in my text that the bird that was slain was a clean bird. The text demanded that it should be. The raven was never sacrificed, nor the cormorant, nor the vulture. It must be a clean bird, says the text, and it suggests the pure Jesus, the holy Jesus. Although He spent His boyhood in the worst village on earth, although blasphemies were poured into His ear enough to have poisoned any one else, He stands before the world a perfect Christ. 3. I remark also, in regard to this first bird, mentioned in the text, that it was a defenceless bird. When the eagle is assaulted, with its iron beak it strikes like a bolt against its adversary. This was a dove or a sparrow—most probably the former. Take the dove, or pigeon, in your hand, and the pecking of its beak upon your hand makes you laugh at the feebleness of its assault. The reindeer, after it is down, may fell you with its antlers. The ox, after you think it is dead, may break your leg in its death struggle. The harpooned whale, in its last agony, may crush you in the coil of the unwinding rope. But this was a dove—perfectly harmless, perfectly defenceless—type of Him who said, "I have trod the winepress alone, and there was none to help." None to help! The murderers have it all their own way. Where was the soldier in the Roman regiment who swung his sword in the defence of the Divine Martyr? Did they put one drop of oil on His gashed feet? Was there one in all that crowd manly and generous enough to stand up for Him? Were the miscreants at the Cross any more interfered with in their work of spiking Him fast than the carpenter in his shop driving a nail through a pine board? The women cried, but there was no balm in their tears. None to help! none to help! 4. But I come now to speak

of this second bird of the text. The priest took the second bird, tied it to the hyssop branch, and then plunged it in the blood of the first bird. Ah, that is my soul plunged for cleansing in the Saviour's blood. There is not enough water in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans to wash away our smallest sin. Sin is such an outrage on God's universe that nothing but blood can atone for it. You know the life is in the blood, and as the life had been forfeited, nothing could buy it back but blood. What was it that was sprinkled on the door-post when the destroying angel went through the land? Blood. What was it that went streaming from the altar of ancient sacrifice? Blood. What was it that the priest carried into the Holy of Holies, making intercession for the people? Blood. What was it that Jesus sweat in the Garden of Gethsemane? Great drops of blood. What does the wine in the sacramental cup signify? Blood. What makes the robes of the righteous in heaven so fair? "They are washed in the blood of the Lamb." What is it that cleanses all our pollution? "The blood of Jesus Christ, which cleanses from all sin." 5. I notice now that as soon as this second bird was dipped in the blood of the first bird, the priest unloosed it, and it was free—free of wing and free of foot. It could whet its beak on any tree-branch it chose; it could pick the grapes of any vineyard it chose. It was free. A type of our souls after we have been washed in the blood of the Lamb. We can go where we will. We can do what we will. You say, "Had you better not qualify that?" No; for I remember in conversion the will is changed, and the man will not will that which is wrong. 6. The next thing I noticed about this bird, when it was loosed—and that is the main idea—is, that it flew away. Which way did it go? When you let a bird loose from your grasp which way does it fly? Up. What are wings for? To fly with. We should be going heavenward. That is the suggestion. But I know that we have a great many drawbacks. You had them yesterday, or the day before; and although you want to be going heavenward, you are constantly discouraged. But, I suppose, when that bird went out of the priest's hands, it went by inflections—sometimes stooping. A bird does not shoot directly up—but this is the motion of a bird. So the soul soars towards God, rising up in love, and sometimes depressed by trial. It does not always go just in the direction it would like to go. But the main course is right. (*T. De Witt Talmage.*) *Freedom and exultation of the restored life* :—Alas for any poor beguiled soul that turns away in scorn of the glorious gospel of the blessed God! Ye mistake it who regard it as a summons to a slavish and sorrowful life. It is a great voice out of heaven crying, "Come up hither." It is a call of the radiant dayspring as it bursts on the poor bird nestling in the withering grass, revealing the grandeurs of the everlasting firmament, that it may fly—fly—fly! Let me tell you again my old story of the eagle. For many months it pined and drooped in its cage, and seemed to have forgotten that it was of the lineage of the old plumed kings of the forest and the mountain; and its bright eye faded, and its strong wings drooped, and its kingly crest was bowed, and its plumes were torn and soiled amid the bars and dust of its prison-house. So in pity of its forlorn life we carried its cage out to the open air, and broke the iron wire and flung wide the lowly door; and slowly, falteringly, it crept forth to the sultry air of that cloudy summer noon and looked listlessly about it. But just then, from a rift in an overhanging cloud, a golden sunbeam flashed upon the scene. And it was enough. Then it lifted its royal crest, the dim eye blazed again, the soiled plumes unfolded and rustled, the strong wings moved themselves, with a rapturous cry it sprang heavenward. Higher, higher, in broader, braver circles it mounted toward the firmament, and we saw it no more as it rushed through the storm-clouds and soared to the sun. And would, O ye winged spirits! who dream and pine in this poor earthly bondage, that only one ray from the blessed Sun of Righteousness might fall on you this hour! for then would there be the flash of a glorious eye, and a cry of rapture, and a sway of exulting wings, as another redeemed and risen spirit sprang heavenward unto God! (*C. Wadsworth, D.D.*) *Blood-washed Christians* :—It is said in Germany, of one Prince Henry, when a little boy, that he had a great aversion to his bath. He didn't like it, and cried and squealed every morning when the time for his ablutions came round. One morning, to his very great pleasure, the nurse said he need not have it, and he soon took to showing to the other children how he had conquered the nurse to his royal mother's aggravation. He went out for a walk later in the day, and when he entered the palace gates on the return journey, the sentinel at that point offered him no salute, and that had never happened before. Being a prince he was greatly respected, and felt proud of the salute of the soldiers. Coming up to the palace door, there the soldier stood on

guard, but no salute was given. The little boy went up to the stairwart sentinel quite angry, and said, "Do you know who I am?" "Oh, yes, Prince Henry; but we never salute unwashed princes." He never said anything in reply, but passed quietly into the palace, and the next morning he took his bath as required. They did not salute unwashed princes, and the world does not salute unwashed Christians. You are a royal blood-washed prince if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and the world will take knowledge of you if you have been with Jesus, taking knowledge of Christ in you the hope of glory. (*J. Spencer.*) *Appropriate return for the Saviour's blood-shedding*:—In an Italian hospital was a severely wounded soldier. A lady visitor spoke to him, dressed his wounds, smoothed his pillow, and made him all right for the day. When leaving she took a bouquet of flowers, and laid it beside his head. The soldier, with his pale face and eyes full of tears, looked up, and said: "That is too much kindness." She was a lady with a true Italian heart, and looking back to the soldier, she quietly replied, "No, not too much for one drop of Italian blood." Shall we not freely own that the consecration of all our powers of body and spirit is not too much to give in return for the shedding of our Emmanuel's blood on our behalf? (*S. S. Chronicle.*) *Christian consecration*:—Did you ever hear of Hedley Vicars, that good soldier? He was once reading the Bible, and accidentally—he was not religious then, I believe—accidentally he happened to come upon the verse—"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." He thought, "Is that true? Is that true to me? Does the blood of Jesus Christ wash out all my sin? Then I resolve I will henceforth live as a man who has been washed in the blood of Jesus Christ." A noble resolve! Remember it—"I will live as a man ought to live who has been washed in the blood of Jesus Christ." How is a man to live who has been washed in the blood of Christ? That was a noble resolve! (*John Vaughan.*) *Hyssop*.—*A sermon to children on hyssop*:—(chap. xiv. 4.) Text chosen to illustrate one simple truth. A very little and insignificant thing may be used for very important work. Of this "hyssop" the Jews were to make a sort of brush to sprinkle the door-posts with. It was but a little plant, for of Solomon it is said, "He spake of trees, from the cedar-tree even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall." It is a short-stemmed plant, growing in crevices like the ferns in our walls. It is bristly, and so suitable for making into a brush. It is bitter, and so it was thought to have cleansing properties; and, therefore, the Psalmist prays, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean." 1. God uses little things for His work. True He uses the great cedar for making His temple, and the acacia boards for His tabernacle; but He also uses the little hyssop. Children are but "little things," and yet the Lord needs and uses them. Illustration: Naaman's maid. Children at our Lord's triumphal entry. The nurse who influenced the good Lord Shaftesbury. 2. God chooses the little things He wants to use. There are many little plants besides the hyssop; but only that one was chosen for this particular work. There are many sorts of grass, but only one, with specially interlacing roots, is used to keep up the great dams that hold back the sea in Holland. God will find out some particular work for each one of us; and all through life, as well as now, our joy will be to do what He finds for us to do. 3. God expects us to put something of our own into our service. The hyssop had something of its own. It put it into its work when it was used to soothe Christ's pain on the Cross. It is not enough just to do right, we must try to do right earnestly, skilfully, cheerfully, prettily: putting our own best selves into the doing. We are to be God's agents, but we must never forget this—He would have us put our love, our goodwill, our abilities, and our happy spirit, into all His work. *If he be poor*.—*Provision for the poor*:—The poor man is often overlooked. There is always a strong tendency in the more favoured classes to pass him by, and to forget, if not to despise him. But God does not forget him. The directions for his particular case are just as special and authoritative as any contained in this ritual. The Lord would thus assure him of His care—that He feels for him the same deep interest as for others, and brings atonement equally within his reach. There is a common level in the Divine administrations, upon which "the rich and poor meet together, and the Lord is the Maker of them all." The poor are His children, as well as the rich. He anointed His Son Jesus, to preach the gospel to them. And the most neglected and down-trodden child of want has just as good a right to cleansing and heaven, and may count as much upon the sympathy and grace of God, as his wealthy neighbour. If he cannot get three lambs, he is just as welcome and acceptable with one lamb and two doves. The poor widow's mite cast into the treasury of the Lord receives a higher commendation than all the costly donations

of the wealthy. Mary, with her two young pigeons is just as completely cleansed as she who could add thereto a lamb of a year old. But although the law favoured the leper who was poor it did not exempt him. It accommodated the burden to his strength, but it did not remove it. If he could not bring three lambs he was still bound to bring one lamb and two doves. If he could not get three deals of flour one deal had to be forthcoming. There are some people who make poverty a virtue, and claim exemption from everything because they are poor. But God's commands are upon the poor as well as upon those more favoured in earthly possessions. He does not excuse them because they are indigent. They are sinners as well as other men, and must be cleansed by the same processes. There is no more merit in being poor than in being rich. Poverty cannot save a man. Beggars may go down to eternal death as well as millionaires. There is often as much crime in rags as in purple and fine linen. All classes are infected, and all classes must have recourse to the blood of the Lamb and receive upon them the same "blood of sprinkling," and the same consecrating oil of the Spirit. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) Such as he can get.—According to ability :—He shall "offer." That is the law. But he shall offer only "such as he can get." That is the mercy. But in mercy there is a law. Pity is not unruly, out of harmony with eternal righteousness and truth; tears are part of the Divine economy, as well as constellations. See how everywhere in the holy Book we find judgment and mercy, law and love, discipline and rest of soul. Christianity is a yoke, a burden, but light and easy. Here is the considerateness of God even in law. The law is not cast-iron; the law is not an expression of arbitrary will. The law rises high as heaven, and yet it stoops as lowly as human infirmity and need. The next verse is even more explicit in its tenderness; ver. 31 begins, "Even such as he is able to get." The emphasis is on the word "able"; all the meaning is to be found in that word. Not, such as he can casually pick up; not, such as may happen to come in his way at the moment; that is not law, that is folly. A thought of that kind would wreck the order and unity of creation. How very different is the instruction or injunction, "Even such as he is able to get"—after he has walked ten miles, after he has done the very best in his power, after he has strained his thought to the agony of anxiety; then if his offering, how poor soever it be, shall prove to be the very best of his ability, it shall go right up into heaven and be accepted there as if it were a king's offering, without spot or blemish, without infirmity of age, or without sign of unequal conflict. Here, then, is unity combined with diversity. If you bring a thousand pounds, it may be much, it may be nothing. If you bring the smallest coin of the realm, which indeed is no coin at all but a mere token, if it be all you can do, if it be such as you are able to get, it is a mountain of fine gold and there is hardly room for such a gift in heaven. What a variety of offering may be found on the Christian altar! There is a great offering of gold. Some men have nothing but gold to give, but they give it with both hands, they give it with a blessing; they send their love with it, and love doubles every gift. Here is a great offering of work; morning, noon, and night the offerer is wondering what he can do next. All his time is God's; he will accept any position that may be given to him. He does not elect his own place, he simply tells what his faculty is, and he is willing to give the whole of that faculty twelve hours in the day to the service of Christ. Here is a great offering of music; here is a leading voice, here is a spiritual interest in that sweet department of public worship; the voice is given, all that the voice means is joyously contributed; the giver says, "I would give more if I could, but this is all I have been able to get, take it, O Christ, it is given in Thy name; receive it all." Here is a great offering of home-service. That home-church has never had its history written. The history of the home-church never can be put into words. It is the great church, it is the church out of which all other churches are cut, like palaces out of the solid rocks. Palaces owe themselves to the great quarries of the earth; they are not select, dainty, specially-jewelled stone; the great cathedrals all came out of the quarry. And the home-church is, if it may be so expressed without roughness, the quarry, the stone bed, out of which all the other churches are built, though they be called minsters and temples and cathedrals. What a great offering there is of love. Love has no hours. Love never entered into a union or a federation for the purpose of seeing how little it could do and how much it could get. Love never begins, because it never ceases. "Such as he can get." Nor is this the only phrase that indicates the tenderness of law. In ver. 21 of this very chapter we read, "And if he be poor, and cannot get so much; then," &c. We need not ask if this book is an inspired book. The righteousness, the tenderness, meet so uniquely and co-

operate so perfectly that there must be more than human thought in all these economic and considerate arrangements. Points of this kind are the true arguments for inspiration. "If he be poor, and cannot get so much; then," &c. Thus God makes room at the altar for the poor man, and any altar that makes room for the poor, stands on earth, but reaches up to heaven. By this sign know ye that ye are in front of God's altar. "Such as he can get" often means nothing more than, "Such as God has given him." What have we that we have not received? God orders the business of men. If men would recognise this they would be quieter and more thankful. There is a sense in which we can all do more. What is that sense? It is only true in so far as it proceeds out of the deeper doctrine that we can all be more. This is a question of quality; this a question of moral capacity. The great thing in this Christian education and discipline is to make the man himself more, his quality finer, his sensitiveness more exquisite, his consciousness of indebtedness to God profounder and livelier. We shall never have any revival of hand-action that is worth anything until we have a revival of heart-life, heart-love, heart-faith. Let us pray for increase of heart. (J. Parker, D.D.)

Vers. 34-57. **Leprosy in a house.**—*Leprosy of house and garments* (see also chap. xiii. 49):—Few subjects have proved more perplexing to the student of Scripture than this. That human dwellings and garments should exhibit a similar disease to that which infects the human body seems at first sight to be highly improbable. We are indebted to the recent discoveries of the microscope for the first intimation of the true nature of the leprosy of house and garments. A careful examination of the Levitical narrative in the light of modern science leaves no room to doubt that the conclusions of Sommer, Kurtz, and other recent authors, who attribute a vegetable origin to this plague, are correct. The characteristics mentioned are such as can belong only to plants. There are some species of fungi which could have produced all the effects described, and whose form and colour answer admirably to the appearances presented by the leprosy. We are therefore safe in believing that the phenomena in question were caused by fungi. The language of Moses is evidently popular, not scientific, and may therefore be supposed to include not only different species, but even different genera and orders of fungi as concerned in the production of the effects described. The leprosy of the house consisted of reddish and greenish patches. The reddish patches on the wall were in all likelihood caused by the presence of a fungus well known under the common name of dry-rot, and called by botanists *Merulius lacrymans*. Builders have often painful evidence of the virulent and destructive nature of this scourge. It is frequent all the year round, being in this respect different from other fungi, which are usually confined to the season of decay. If once established dry-rot spreads with amazing rapidity, destroying the best houses in a very short time. The law regarding it in Leviticus is founded upon this property; seven days only were allowed for its development, so that its true nature might be placed beyond doubt. The precautions here adopted are in entire accordance with the nature and habits of fungi. By emptying the house of its furniture, shutting the doors and windows, and excluding the air and light, the very conditions were provided in which the dry-rot would luxuriate and come to maturity. If the walls were completely impregnated with its seed and spawn, this short period of trial would amply suffice to show the fact, and the building might then safely be condemned to undergo a process of purification. There are no means of restoring rotten timber to a sound condition, and the dry-rot can only be eradicated by removing the decayed and affected parts, clearing away all the spawn and destroying the germs with which the plaster and the other materials of the walls may have been impregnated. For this purpose the process of kyanising and burnetising have been recommended—that is, washing the walls or the woodwork with a strong solution of corrosive sublimate or chloride of zinc. If the dry-rot is not fairly established in a house it may be removed with tolerable ease by these processes; should the disease, however, have become widespread and deep-seated, no means of dealing with the evil can be depended upon, except that of removing altogether the corrupted and contagious matter and admitting a free circulation of air. This was exactly what the Jewish priest was commanded to do (vers. 40-42). It often happens, however, that even this severe operation proves ineffectual; and after repeated repairs of the same nature, it is found that the building is so hopelessly ruined that it must be abandoned and dismantled (vers. 43-45). Dr. Thomson, in "The Land and the Book," mentions that the upper rooms of the houses in Palestine, if not constantly ventilated, become quickly

covered with mould and are unfit to live in. In many cases the roofs of the houses are little better than earth rolled hard, and it is by no means uncommon to see grass springing into a short-lived existence upon them. Such habitations must be damp and peculiarly subject to the infection of fungi. During the months of November and December especially, fungi make their appearance in the wretched ephemeral abodes of the poorer classes; and in the walls of many a dwelling at the present day may be seen the same leprous appearances described by Moses three thousand years ago. When the Israelites entered Palestine they occupied the dwellings of the dispossessed aboriginal inhabitants instead of building new houses for themselves. And in these dwellings, as the Canaanites lived in the midst of moral and physical impurity, and were, moreover, ignorant of all sanitary conditions, the plague of leprosy would be very apt to manifest itself. The Bible speaks of it as sent expressly by God Himself: "When ye be come into the land of Canaan, which I give to you for a possession, and I put the plague of leprosy in a house of the land of your possession." It was so sent in mercy and not in judgment, to show to them, by a palpable proof appealing to the eye, what could not be so well revealed by other evidence. It was the visible manifestation of a hidden insidious unwholesomeness—the breaking out, as it were, of an internal and universal disease. It directed attention to the unhealthy character of the house, and stimulated inquiry as to how it could be remedied. Whereas if no such abnormal appearance presented itself, the inhabitants might remain unconsciously in the midst of conditions which would slowly but surely undermine their health, and in the end prove fatal. In the Levitical narrative we read that in the walls of the affected houses there were greenish as well as reddish streaks. These greenish streaks were caused by a much humbler kind of fungus than the the *Merulius lachrymans*, or dry-rot, concerned in the production of the reddish streaks. Every one is familiar with the common green mould, or *Penicillium glaucum*, of botanists. This fungus is extremely abundant everywhere, and seems to have been no less general in the ancient world, for we find traces of it pretty frequently in amber, mixed with fragments of lichens and mosses. It grows on all kinds of decaying substances, and is very protean in its appearance, assuming different forms according to the nature of the body or situation which it affects. Common mould grows on every substance, whether animal or vegetable, in a state of decay. It grows even upon the human body when it is in an enfeebled or disordered condition; and many diseases of the skin are owing to its efforts to develop and spread itself. The thrush in children, the muscardine so destructive to silkworms, the fungoid growth which so often causes the death of the common house-fly in autumn, are all different forms of the common mould. Its germs or spores are constantly floating in the air or swimming in the water in incalculable myriads, so that it is difficult to conceive how any place can be free from their presence. The atmosphere of our houses is loaded with them; and were we endowed with microscopic vision, we should see them dancing about in the draughts and currents of our rooms, or shining among the motes in the pencilled rays of sunshine. The ubiquity of mould has given rise to the theory of spontaneous generation, still held by a certain class of naturalists; but the immense profusion of its seeds, and their wonderful powers of adaptability under varying circumstances, and of entering through the finest conceivable apertures, will easily account for its presence in every situation, without being under the necessity of admitting what has never yet been proved—that substances in a particular state of decay can, without seeds or germs of any kind, generate low forms of life. Many medical men are of opinion that various zymotic diseases, if not originated, are increased by the presence of these minute cellulæ in the blood, and by their deleterious action in developing themselves. The injuries inflicted by fungi are indeed incalculable. But we have nevertheless a grand compensation in the benefits which they confer in accelerating, by their unparalleled rapidity of growth, the process of decay, and removing from the atmosphere into their own tissues, where they are innocuous, the putrescent effluvia of dead substances. They also economise the stock of organised material which has been slowly and tediously gained from the earth, air, and water, by preventing it from going back through decomposition to the mineral state, and preserving it in an organic form to be at once made available for the purposes of higher animal and plant life. Mould, for these reasons, is not so much an evil in itself as an indication of evil conditions in the world, and by minimising these it renders an all-important service in the economy of nature. Its great purpose is purely benevolent; but, like the storm intended to purify the atmosphere, it some-

times oversteps its limits, and proves injurious in particular cases. The minute regulations for inspecting and cleansing those houses where symptoms of leprosy appeared, indicate how complete was the sanitary system under which the ancient Israelites lived. God considered no part of their domestic and social economy, however humble, beneath His notice. Cleanliness in person, in dress, in dwellings, and in all outward appointments, was enforced by statutes of a peculiarly solemn character. All these ceremonial enactments were in the first instance intended for sanitary purposes. God had respect to the physical health and well-being of His people. He wished them to be patterns of purity, models of beauty, their bodies to be perfectly developed in the midst of the most favourable circumstances; and therefore the most admirable arrangements were made for securing cleanly, orderly, and healthy habitations. But not for purely physical purposes alone were the Levitical laws regarding the leprosy of the house enforced. They had also a spiritual significance. All experience tells us of the mysterious connection, founded upon the constitution of our twofold nature, between physical and moral evil—between external and internal impurity. The proverb, "Cleanliness is next to godliness," is truer even than it is admitted to be. Physical filth has in innumerable instances been the means of turning away the Lord from the homes of those who endure it. For want of a little more room and a little more purity in their dwellings, the sublimest truths fall dead upon the ears of thousands. The salvation of the poor, though to them the gospel is preached, is in very many cases rendered impossible, humanly speaking, on account of the degrading conditions amid which they live, and the deadening, hardening influence which familiarity with noxious sights and smells produces. How often are the spiritual instructions of the district visitor thrown away on account of the unhallowed effects of filthy surroundings! Sad it is to think of the leprosy of the house being the type of the leprosy of sin which infects the earthly tabernacle of this body. We bear about with us this plague in all our members. From the crown of the head to the sole of the foot there is no soundness in us. Be it ours to put our natures entirely under the purifying power of God's Spirit, so that they may be cleansed from all impure desires, &c. So much for the leprosy of the house. The leprosy of garments may have been caused by the same fungi. Precisely the same appearances manifested themselves in the one case as in the other. I am disposed to attribute the greenish streaks on the garments to the common green mould; for, as I have observed, it is ubiquitous, and grows as readily on clothes as on house walls, when left in damp, ill-ventilated, ill-lighted places. The reddish patches, however, seem to me to have been produced by the growth of the *Sporendonema*, or red mould, very common on cheese; or of the *Palmella prodigiosa*. This last-mentioned plant is occasionally found on damp walls in shady places, and on various articles of dress and food, sometimes extending itself over a considerable area. It is usually a gelatinous mass of the colour and general appearance of coagulated blood, whence it has received the famous name of Gory-dew. Though formerly ranked with the algae, or seaweed family, it is now ascertained by more accurate physiological researches to be a species of mould; so that, under whatever names we may class them, the plants which occasioned the strange appearances on houses and garments belong to the same tribe. Instances of reddish patches suddenly investing linen and woollen clothes are by no means confined to the Levitical narrative. A whole volume might be filled with similar examples. Along with other marvellous prodigies they abound in the mediæval chronicles; and were they not authenticated by the most trustworthy evidence, we should hesitate—from their very extraordinary character—to accept them as true. It was by no means rare to find, in the Middle Ages, consecrated wafers and priestly vestments sprinkled with a minute red substance like blood. Such abnormal appearances were called *Signacula*, as tokens of the Saviour's living body; and pilgrimages were not unfrequently made to witness them. In several cases the Jews were suspected, on account of their abhorrence of Christianity, of having caused sacramental hosts to bleed, and were, therefore, ruthlessly tormented and put to death in large numbers. Upwards of ten thousand were slaughtered at Rotil, near Frankfort, in 1296, for this reason. The bleeding of the host, produced in consequence of the scepticism of the officiating priest, gave rise to the miracle of Bolsena in 1264; the priest's garment stained with this bloody-looking substance being preserved until recent times as a relic. This gave rise to the festival of the Corpus Christi founded by Urban IV. Before the potato-blight broke out in 1846, red mould spots appeared on wet linen surfaces exposed to the air in bleaching-grounds, as well as on household linen kept

in damp places, in Ireland. In September, 1848, Dr. Eckard, of Berlin, while attending a cholera patient, observed the same production on a plate of potatoes which had been placed in a cupboard in the patient's house. All these instances—and hundreds more might be enumerated—though somewhat exaggerated by the dilated eye of fear, were found by microscopic investigation to be caused by the extraordinary development in abnormal circumstances of the red mould. Occurring, as most of them did, before the outbreak of epidemics, which they were supposed to herald, they obviously point to the conclusion that they were developed by unhealthy conditions of the atmosphere. In ordinary times but few of the fungi which caused these alarming appearances are produced, and then only in obscure and isolated localities; but their seeds lie around us in immense profusion, waiting but the recurrence of similar atmospheric conditions as existed in former times, to exhibit as extraordinary a development. "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works; in wisdom hast Thou made them all!" is the thought that arises in the devout soul at the contemplation of the wonderful structure and history of these minute existences, which live and die unknown to the great majority of mankind. Even a mould, requiring the highest powers of the microscope for its examination, can become in His hands a mighty scourge or a transcendent benefit. (*H. Macmillan, D.D.*) *House leprosy*:—The particular nature of this affection I cannot very certainly determine. Michaelis thinks it was a sort of mural efflorescence, which often appears in damp situations, cellars, and ground-floors, and so corrodes walls and plastering as to affect and damage everything near it, and sometimes quite destroying the entire building. Calmet thinks it was a disorder caused by animalculæ which eroded the walls, and finally destroyed them, if left undisturbed. But perhaps we cannot do better than to agree with the Rabbins and early Christian Fathers, who believed that this leprosy was not natural, but sent of God as an extraordinary judgment, to compel men to the public acknowledgment and expiation of some undetected negligence or crime. It was the stone crying out of the wall against the sinner, and the beam out of the timber answering it (Hab. ii. 11). It came like a great domestic affliction, saying, "This is not your rest, because it is polluted." It was the hand of God upon the forgetters of His law. It was "the curse of the Lord, in the house of the wicked." Its typical significance will at once suggest itself. It plainly points to the fact that not only man, and his surroundings in life, but his very dwelling-place—the earth itself—is infected. The whole surface and framework of the world bespeaks infection, disobedience, and disorder. We must tear it with instruments of iron, and mix its mould with tears and sweat, before it will yield us bread. Walls and houses must be built to shelter us from its angry blasts. And with all that we can do, the sea will now and then engulf the proudest navies, and the hailstones blast the budding harvests, and famine and pestilence cut down the strength of empires, and earthquakes bury up great cities in a common tomb, and the sun and the moon flash down death in their rays, and the very winds come laden with destruction. And even in a moral aspect, the material world, though meant for spiritual as well as other good, has often been to man a source of defilement. Creation is a standing miracle to show us eternal power and Godhead. Every ray of light is an electric cord, let down from the unknown heavens to lift our hearts into communion with "the Father of light." Every night puts us into the midst of a sublime temple in which the tapers burn around the everlasting altar, and through which rolls the vespers anthem of the heavenly spheres, to inspire us with adoration. And the innumerable changes that pass before our eyes are but so many letters to spell out to us the name of the unknown God, in whom we live and have our being. But, how often have these very things tended to establish men in unbelief, and tempted them from the ways of piety and peace? How often have persons looked up into the starry sky, and reasoned, until they were led to say the gospel is a forgery?—or dug into the earth, and insisted that Moses was mistaken in its age?—or cut among the arteries and tissues of organic life, and denied man's immortality?—or watched the uniformity of God's common laws, and pronounced a miracle impossible?—or dipped a little into physical science, and controverted the very existence of a deity? How often have earth's products proven to be mere baits and lures to unguarded souls to lead them down to death? How have its wines tempted men to intemperance, and its beautiful groves to the licentiousness of the idolater? How frequently the very gold or silver of its rocks have taken the place of God Himself, and fastened everlasting condemnation on the worshipper? And what scene of beauty contained in this world, but has served to draw the heart of some one from the Lord? But it

shall not always be so. The leprosy in our dwelling-place may pass away as well as leprosy in our persons, or in our clothing. God has appointed rites for its cleansing. The time is coming when "there shall be no more curse." But it is to be the last thing cleansed. Regeneration begins first in the spirit. From the spirit it extends to the outward life, then to the redemption of the body. And after that comes the grand deliverance, when "the creature (or creation) itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Not only our personal nature is to be renewed, but the very world in which we live. And it is only upon the theory of the ultimate and complete recovery of the world from all damage of sin, that the prescriptions now before us can be explained. The first thing to be done to a house found to be leprous, was to have the affected stones removed, the walls scraped, and the plastering renewed. This done, all parties were to wait to see what the effect would be upon the disorder. This evidently recalls the flood, and God's dealings with the earth at that time. It was then that He broke up the old and tainted foundations, swept away the scum of its surface, and overcast it with a new order of things. All is therefore in waiting now, till our great High Priest and Judge shall come forth again to inspect the earth. After the lapse of an appropriate time of trial, which is left indefinite in the record, the priest was again to examine the house that had been thus dealt with; and if the plague had broken out again, and had spread in the house, he was to break it down, "the stones of it, and the timber thereof, and all the mortar of the house, and carry them forth out of the city into an unclean place." If the leprous symptoms were not stayed, it was to be completely and for ever demolished. There was no further hope for it. It perished in its uncleanness. I take this as a type, not of what is to befall the world, but of what would have befallen it without the redemption that has come in to stay its corruption and save it from ruin. How, then, was a leprous house to be cleansed? We have seen what was to be done to it upon the first appearance of the plague. We accordingly read that, after the lapse of a suitable time to test whether the infection was stayed, "the priest shall come in," &c. (vers. 48-53). All this refers us back to the blood-shedding, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and holds forth the great fact that the world is made clean to us now, and will be entirely cleansed hereafter, by virtue of the redemptive work of our great High Priest. Because Jesus was slain, and has redeemed us to God by His blood, the saints may take it as their song, "We shall reign on the earth." Some suppose that this dwelling-place of man is some day to fall to pieces, and pass away, and be no more. Had Christ not died, or having died, not risen again, it might be so; but now a light of glory rises upon its futurity. It shall not die, but live. Great changes may yet pass upon it, but it shall survive unbarmed. This world was Heaven's gift to man. It was his patrimonial estate. It was his sin that blighted it. And just so far as he is redeemed, he shall get his own again, and hold it by a charter written in his Saviour's blood. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*)

The plague in the house:—I fancy you have heard words like these before, though you might never have known that they were in the Bible. But you have heard mother or father, when worried and vexed, often say, "It almost seems as if there was a plague in the house!"

I. THE KIND OF PLAGUE THE TEXT SPEAKS ABOUT WAS A STRANGE ONE. It first appeared in a little green or reddish spot, growing on the wall of the house. When that was noticed, the person who lived in the house had to go to the priest and say to him, "It seemeth to me there is as it were a plague in the house." Then the priest came and looked at the spot, and ordered the house to be locked up for a week. At the end of that time, if the spot had not grown any larger, it was simply cut out, and the house was declared to be quite safe to dwell in. But if the spot had increased, then they knew that it was the plague, and all the stones round about it were taken out and new ones put in their places, and the old ones were carried away to a distance. But if, after all this care had been taken, the spot appeared again, then they knew it was no use trying further that way. This was a "fretting leprosy," as it was called; so the house was ordered to be pulled down, and all its stones carried far away, and a new house built in its stead with entirely new stones.

II. HAVEN'T WE PLAGUES IN THE HOUSE NOW, SOMETHING DIFFERENT FROM THAT PERHAPS, AND YET SOMETHING LIKE TOO? 1. There is a bad temper. What a plague that is in the house! There is a sulky temper and a quick temper. The sulky one is when a boy or girl goes moping, moping, and won't speak or do anything cheerfully. It is a very hurtful plague in the house. Then there is the quick temper, up in a moment, over in a moment! Perhaps this is better than the other, if we are to make any distinction; but better

be rid of bad temper altogether. 2. Selfishness is another plague in the house. 3. Disobedience is another plague in the house. No boy or girl ever yet came to good who did not try to obey father and mother. III. WHERE THE PLAGUE BREAKS OUT. 1. Where ventilation is bad. Now what fresh air is to the body, God's Spirit is to the soul—that which keeps it fresh and free from plague. Maintain that Spirit in the house, prayer and love for God, and—striving to obey Him—no plague shall come nigh thy dwelling. 2. The plague also breaks out where sunshine never comes. What a healing thing is the sunshine! How glorious it can make even the dingiest street! The plague never comes where the sunshine is, and cheerfulness is the sunshine of the home. There was a great scholar once, Dr. Dwight, a big man with a great broad chest. Once when the students in the college were not getting on well, he said to them, "Gentlemen, I see there is something wrong; you are becoming too melancholy. You must learn to laugh, that's the way to cure the plague." So he broadened his own chest, took a big breath, and burst into such a hearty laugh that all the others laughed too. "That's very good," he said, "very good for a beginning; but see that you keep it up!" And it is good practice in the house to have a hearty laugh. Keep cheerfulness there, and the plague won't trouble you. (*J. Reid Howatt.*) *The way to remove the plague:*—When plague, or pestilence, or war, or famine, come on a land, there are two classes of persons who act in opposite ways. One class will pray only that God may remove them, and do nothing more; another class will set about sanitary reform—a most precious and important thing—but they will do nothing more. Now, we are taught in this chapter that the two are to be combined. The priest not only applied to God, and offered sacrifices that the plague might be removed from the house, but he set to work and pulled down the stones, and broke the timbers, and scraped the house, and had it plastered and cleansed; and thus there was the most effective sanitary process, accompanied with the most sacred and Christian appeal to Him who is the Lord and the Giver of life; and who alone healeth, and when He healeth none can make ill. Now, it is the happy combination of these that constitutes in all things the perfection of Christian conduct. If we so think of means as to think of nothing else, we shall have no blessing; if we so think of, or engage in prayer, as to exclude means, we shall have no blessing. If we suppose that by attending to all that is just, and proper, and obligatory in sanitary measures, we may defy God, we blaspheme; but on the other hand, if we act as some, pray, and appoint days of fasting and of prayer, but do nothing to lift the poor from their degradation, to improve their dwellings, to increase their comforts, to give raiment to the naked, food to the hungry, a shelter and a home to them that have none, then that is downright hypocrisy. But if we can combine the two, by using all the means that God in His providence has given us, as vigorously as if all depended upon the means, and yet, while we do so, look up to God as if the means were worthless, and He must do all, then we shall combine the blessed heavenly benediction with the use of the most effective earthly means, and God, our own God, shall crown us with His blessing. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*)

CHAPTER XV.

VERS. 2-33. *Because of his issue he is unclean.—Human nature unclean:*—1. We learn, in a very striking manner, the intense holiness of the Divine presence. Not a soil, not a stain, not a speck can be tolerated for a moment in that thrice-hallowed region. 2. Again, we learn that human nature is the ever-flowing fountain of uncleanness. It is hopelessly defiled and defiling. 3. Finally, we learn, afresh, the expiatory value of the blood of Christ, and the cleansing, sanctifying virtues of the precious Word of God. When we think of the unsullied purity of the sanctuary, and then reflect upon nature's irremediable defilement, and ask the question, "How-ever can we enter and dwell there?" the answer is found in "the blood and water" which flowed from the side of a crucified Christ—a Christ who gave up His life unto death for us, that we might live by Him. (*C. H. Mackintosh.*) *Secret uncleanness:*—All the uncleannesses here enumerated are such as were, for the most part, unknown except to the individual alone. They must, therefore, refer to sins of solitude and secrecy. The lesson is here taught that we may be great sinners without anybody else knowing anything about it. There may be a very correct exterior life,

and yet a secret cherishing of pride, and lust, and unbelief, and a secret painting of the walls with imagery, as much unfitting us for the society of the pure and good as any open and outbreathing wickedness. "The lively imagination of a gay, poetic mind is not less sinful when it scatters forth its luscious images, than the dull, brutal feelings of the stupid, ignorant boor." Even the quiet and involuntary exudations of natural feeling are often to be numbered with the uncleanest things. It is amazing how deep-seated the contaminations of sin are. A man may be truly penitent. He may be set to be a good servant of God; and yet, every now and then, he will find the disgusting uncleanness of sin quietly and unintentionally escaping from him, contaminating himself and those who come in contact with him or touch what he has touched. His whole nature is yet so full of remaining corruption that the least agitation causes it to trickle over. He lies down to sleep, and presently he finds it in his dreams. He puts forth his hand to welcome a friend, and the very touch sometimes awakes wrong echoes in the soul. He is accidentally thrown into the mere neighbourhood of sin, and the very atmosphere about him seems at times to be laden with excitations of impurity. His depravity cleaves to him like an old sore. Nor are these secret and involuntary outflowings of corruption mere trifles, unworthy of notice. They are here set forth under images and types among the most offensive and disgusting. They are too loathsome for public recital—too hideous even for the mind to dwell upon. God intends thus to signify His deep abhorrence of our inherent corruptions. He means to intimate to us that we have reason to be ashamed and confounded at the secret disorder which still works in us. Nay, He yet adds to these defilements a judicial sentence. They were uncleannesses which excluded from the sanctuary and everything holy. They brought condemnation with them. And some of them were so bad as to need atonement by blood. We need, therefore, to be on our guard against the beginnings of evil. It is indeed melancholy that we, as Christians, still have so much impurity cleaving to us. But still it is not without its good effects. We need something to keep us humble, to drive us continually to the throne of grace, and to keep us ever mindful of our dependence upon the mercy of God. It helps to soften us towards the failings of others, and to make us charitable in our judgments of offenders. It helps greatly to reconcile us to the idea of dying. It contributes to make our dying day a blessed day, because it will put an everlasting end to these vexations. Then we shall be delivered "from the body of this death." (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*)

Purity required:—In this chapter the defilement of sin is the leading thought. Here again there can be no doubt that there was a sanitary element in the regulations. "Cleanliness is next to godliness" is not, as some suppose, a Bible sentence, but it is beyond all question a Bible sentiment. The first all-embracing law of the Mosaic economy is, "Be holy." And the second is like unto it, "Be clean": clean in person, clean in garments, clean in house, clean in camp, clean everywhere. Who can tell how much the world owes to these "health laws of Moses"? "It is certainly a curious thing," writes one who is an authority on the subject, "worthy the notice of every student of the progress of the human race, whether his standpoint be religious or purely scientific, that the moving camp in the wilderness was governed by as strict and perfect a sanitary code as any sanitary commission could now devise." But in the Mosaic institutes the purity of the soul was ever kept before the mind as the main thing to be desired and secured. "Our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience," was always the first thing; "our bodies washed with pure water" was the second (Heb. x. 22); and throughout the book of the law these two have been by God so joined together that no candid mind can put them asunder. (*J. M. Gibson, D.D.*)

Cleanliness a religious duty:—We get here an illustration of that which so often occurs in the law of Moses, viz., that duties of the lowest, humblest order are urged on the people by the highest and noblest sanctions. Common work may be dignified by great motives. It will be regarded by a wise Christian man as a part of his duty which is by no means to be neglected, to maintain order and unsullied cleanliness in person and home. (*C. Clemance, D.D.*)

The secret flow of sin from the natural heart, typified in the running issue:—We are here taught the disgusting constancy with which our original, deep-seated corruption will naturally discover itself. In all situations, towards all persons, at all seasons, this filthiness of the secret soul may be traced. In ver. 4 the man is represented as unclean when he lieth down to sleep, or even to rest at noon. Ah! yonder lies a sinner, and the very ground under him is accursed. His very pillow may shortly become a spear under his throat; just as Jonah's rest soon became a tempestuous sea. A friend comes to see him and gently wakes him, but touches his couch in so doing, and

becomes thereby unclean (ver. 5); for the man is all polluted. However amiable the friend you visit, yet, if still in his unhealed corruption, your intercourse with him spreads its baleful influence over you. You have insensibly been injured by the contact. Oh, how we should watch our souls in mingling with a world lying in wickedness! Oh, how holy, how marvellously strong in holiness was Jesus, who breathed this polluted air and remained as holy as when He came! If the man leave the spot, and another occupy it, that other has seated himself in the sinner's place (ver. 6), and the memory of his sin is not gone. He is in contact with a polluted thing. As when one of us now reads the details of a sinner's career, and our mind rests thereon, we are involved in this sin. If a physician (ver. 7) or an attendant touch the sick man's flesh, he is in contact with sin, and becomes polluted. This legal consequence of any actual contact with the defiled shows us, no doubt, the danger and hazard of even attempting to aid the polluted. It is at the risk of being ourselves involved in their sin. Therefore it must be watchfully done, not boldly and adventurously. You breathe an impure atmosphere: proceed with caution. If (ver. 8) any even accidental touch occur—as if the diseased man spit or sneeze, so as anything from him reaches the bystander, pollution is spread. An accidental word, a casual expression, an unexpected look, may suggest sin; and if it does, forthwith wash it all away ere evening comes. "Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath." Leave no stain for a moment upon thy conscience. When the man rides forth, lo! yonder is a sinner; and his saddle is polluted; and the mattress he spread on the floor of his tent for a temporary rest in his journey (ver. 10) is so polluted that the attendant who lifts it is defiled. Oh! sad, sad estate of man! In going out or coming in, in the house or by the way, his inward fountain of sin flows on unceasingly, and the Holy One of Israel follows him with His eye to mark him as a sinner. Nay, if he put his hand forth (ver. 11) to touch any one—to give him a friendly welcome, or aid him in any work, he conveys pollution, unless he have first "rinsed his hands in water." The sinner, whose natural heart is still unhealed, cannot do even a kind act without sin—his only mode of doing so would be "washing in clean water." And the vessels he uses (ver. 12) must be broken or rinsed in water; even as the earth, on which the sinner has stood as his theatre for committing evil shall be broken in pieces by the fire of the last day ("All these things shall be dissolved," 2 Pet. iii. 11), the trial by water being already past. (A. A. Bonar.) *Atonement required for secret sins*:—A full atonement is required for our inward, secret sins, as much as for open and flagrant sins. The sinful vision that our fancy spread out before us for a moment must be washed away by blood. The tendency which our soul felt to sympathise in that act of resentment or revenge must be washed away by blood. The hour, or minutes, we spent in brooding over our supposed hard lot must be redeemed by blood. The selfish wish we cherished for special prosperity in some undertaking that was to reflect its credit on us only, is to be washed away by blood. The proud aspiration, the sensual impulse, the world-loving eye or soul cast on earth's glories, must be washed away by blood. The darkness, ignorance, suspicion, and misconception we entertain toward God and His salvation, must be washed in blood. "Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part (hidden region of the soul) Thou shalt make me to know wisdom" (Psa. li. 6). (*Ibid.*) *Impurity a contagious evil*:—All those details of Divine precept, by which every person and article anyway brought into contact with the unclean man or woman became unclean, bring out the truth that impurity is an essentially communicable evil. It is so physically; "let sinners look to it." It is so spiritually. How guilty in the very last degree are those who drive a nefarious trade in corrupt literature! How shameful to put indecent thought into print to pollute the young! How demoralising to the soul, how displeasing to God, how scrupulously to be avoided, the questionable conversation that borders on the indelicate and impure! (see Eph. v. 3, 4, 12; Col. iii. 8). (W. Clarkson.) *Beware of contact with sinful persons*:—All this mystically teaches us to beware of courting or choosing the conversation of those that have received any tincture of vice, and not to contract acquaintance with any persons who we have reason to believe are not on good terms with God. There is such a venomous contagion in vice and immorality that familiarity with sinners does, of itself, make a man an associate in their practices: so saith the son of Sirach (Ecclesi. xiii. 1), and thus the apostle commands (1 Tim. v. 22). (*Biblioth. Bibl.*) *Plain speaking on the subject of purity*:—That plain speaking and plain dealing, such as we find here, was necessary, is amply proved by the history of the ancient world, and of the modern world too. The Bible is the only book that has exercised any con-

siderable effect in keeping men and women pure. There are many books, where everything offensive to the ear is studiously avoided, which nevertheless are very poison to the soul. In the Bible, on the other hand, while there is not a little that is offensive to the ear, there is absolutely nothing that is poisonous to the spirit, unless the spirit has been poisoned already; for we must remember that while "to the pure all things are pure," "unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled." There is absolutely nothing in the entire Bible that will not exert a holy and purifying influence on those who read it in the right spirit. And as a historical fact, such has been the result among those who have made these Scriptures their companion and counsellor. The Jews alone among the nations of antiquity had even the conception of purity as we understand it now. Consider for a moment whence we derive those exalted notions of purity which are widely prevalent in modern society, especially among Christian people. Even the purest and the best of Greek philosophers, those who in other respects have come nearest to Bible ethics, are woefully behind in regard to personal purity of heart and life, some of them tolerating and others approving that which enlightened Christian sentiment utterly condemns. Let any one fairly investigate the genesis and "evolution" of our modern ideas of chastity and purity and he will find that they are traceable chiefly to the Hebrew Scriptures as their source. And so the remarkable fact will present itself that to these very Scriptures, and largely to those parts of them which the corrupt imagination of certain cavillers finds an indecency which is all its own, we owe that very sentiment of delicacy which makes it impossible for us to read them aloud in public or in the family. (*J. M. Gibson, D.D.*)

CHAPTER XVI.

VERS. 2, 3. *I will appear in the cloud.*—*Jehovah appearing in a cloud.*—**I. THE CLOUDY DISPENSATIONS.** By a cloud I understand a density approaching to darkness and gloom; and yet that very density and darkness inhabited by the glory of God. If the glory of God were to burst upon us without a cloud, it would be nothing less than a consuming fire. The Church of God has to pass through dispensations that are cloudy in her public capacity, in God's providential dealings with her individual members. Look, for instance, at the Church of God as a body at the present time. Is she not beclouded? Are there not clouds of ignorance, superstition, idolatry, despotic power—clouds of carnal wickedness under the name of Christianity, overspreading Zion? The cloud is still more dense when it overwhelms the soul, as it regards its conflicts when darkness overspreads the mind, and the poor believer cannot pray, cannot sing, nor cannot believe. **II. THE APPEARANCE THAT IS PROMISED.** "I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy-seat." He appears as a wonder-working God; and when in any of the dispensations to which I have referred, the hand of God is seen, how are the souls of God's people filled with awe! "I will appear." Is it the Church that is overwhelmed with a cloud? I will appear for her deliverance, though I may suffer her to pass through fire and through water first. Is it Providence that is mysterious—every hope cut off, all prospects darkened? "I will appear," says Jehovah. Mark the promise—it is positive—"I will appear." The cattle upon a thousand hills are His property; the gold and the silver He declares are all His own; the hearts of kings are in His hands, and He turns them as rivers of water as He pleases. So that He appears working wonders frequently in the world, and those very things which were most threatening appear to be the very things that God was making use of for the real advantage of His people. **III. THE MERCY DISPLAYED.** It is the mercy of the Triune Jehovah, the gift of mercy from God the Father—immutable, eternal, covenant mercy—the mercy of God. That mercy is fully and freely displayed in the person of Christ; yea, more, so far as regards our view of it—the mercy of God the Father laid up from everlasting, recorded in the covenant, fixed in decree, is, to a certain extent, concealed from us, until we discover it in the person of Christ. But when we are brought to view Him as the mercy promised, and then mark the display of that mercy in His incarnation, in His obedience, in His merit, in His blood, in His sufferings, in His victories, in His present employment before the throne, why He is all mercy—mercy embodied in the person of the glorious Mediator. And then, if we

look at the merciful dealings of God the Holy Ghost with His people, in melting their hearts, making them new creatures, giving them life Divine, perfecting the work He has first commenced in personal experience—why we come to this conclusion that our God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is the God of mercy, a merciful God. Then mark the transcendent glory of this mercy, how it is displayed in the face of misery, and rebellion, and ingratitude, and all our wanderings, and all our wants. IV. THE EFFECTS WHICH FOLLOW WHEN JEHOVAH COMES DOWN AND APPEARS IN THE MIDST OF THE CLOUD. It is not merely for a momentary interposition, but for a permanent deliverance, and mercies may be expected by all the praying seed of Jacob. Now allow a familiar illustration here. If a benevolent individual, very wealthy, were accustomed to take a seat, as they used to do in olden times, at the gate of the city, or in any other place of public concourse, and to do so for the very purpose of distributing his bounty, would not that gate be crowded? Who would not go there? Even if we did not want pecuniary alms, if honours, jewels were to be distributed by this person, who would not be there? Who would not receive some token of the kindness and favour of such an one? My hearer, is it not grievous that you and I are not oftener at the mercy-seat? (*J. Irons.*) *The concealing cloud*:—I once visited an invalid woman. She had been confined to bed for a long time, and when I spoke to her, she said: "I think the Lord has forgotten me altogether." The eye of faith had grown dim through bodily weakness, and I replied to her, "Did you ever go down the river and see the lighthouse?" She said she had. "Well, suppose you lived on the opposite side from it, and one day the mist came down, and it grew so thick that you could not see the lighthouse on the other side; would you believe it was there?" "Oh, yes," she said, "because I had seen it before." "And there is another thing would make you believe," I said; "you would hear the shrill whistle coming from the lighthouse warning mariners of the danger that was near. In the same way you should believe that the Lord is still near you; that He has not forgotten you, although a cloud has come between you and God; if you will but listen, you will hear His voice speaking to you; the mist will soon roll away if you look right at Him with the eye of faith." She *did* look, and beheld Jesus as precious to her as ever. (*J. Cameron.*)

Vers. 3-34. **Make an atonement.**—*The annual atonement*:—Before Adam transgressed he lived in communion with God, but after he had broken the covenant he could have no more familiar fellowship with God. Under the Mosaic dispensation, in which God was pleased in His grace to dwell among His people and walk with them in the wilderness, it was still under a reserve: there was a Holy Place wherein the symbol of God's presence was hidden away from mortal gaze. No man might come near to it except in one only way, and then only once in the year, "The Holy Ghost thus signifying that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first Tabernacle was yet standing." Our subject illustrates the appointed way of access to God. This chapter shows that the way of access to God is by atonement, and by no other method. I want you to notice that, of course, this was only a type. The great Day of Atonement did not see an actual atonement made, nor sin really put away; but it was the figure of heavenly things to come. The substance is of Christ. I. Now, then, let us come to the text, and note, first, WHAT WAS DONE on that particular day. The text tells us what was done symbolically—"On that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord." 1. The persons themselves were cleansed. If any of them had become unclean so as to be denied communion with God and His people, they were made clean, so that they might go up to the Tabernacle, and mingle with the congregation. All the host were that morning regarded as unclean, and all had to bow their heads in penitent sorrow because of their uncleanness. After the sacrifice and the sending away of the scapegoat the whole congregation was clean and in a condition to rejoice. It is a far simpler thing to remove outward stains than it is to purge the very substance and nature of man; yet this is what was done on the Day of Atonement typically, and this is what our redeeming Lord actually does for us. We are outlaws, and His atonement purges us of outlawry, and makes us citizens; we are lepers, and by His stripes we are so healed as to be received among the clean. 2. Their persons being made clean, they were also purged of all the sins confessed. Sin that is confessed is evidently real sin, and not a mere dream of a morbid conscience. There is a certain mythical cloud of sin which people talk about, and affect to

deplorable, and yet they have no sense of the solid heinousness of their actual iniquity. Sin confessed with tears, sin which causes the very heart to bleed—killing sin—this is the kind of sin for which Jesus died. Sin which you dare not confess to man, but acknowledge only as you lay your hand upon the Divine sacrifice—such sin the Lord removes from you. The passage is very particular to mention “all sins.” “The goat shall bear upon him *all* their iniquities.” This includes every form of sin, of thought, of word, of deed, of pride, of falsehood, of lust, of malice, of blasphemy. This comprehends crimes against man, and offences against God, of peculiar blackness; and it does not exclude sins of inadvertence, or carelessness, or of omission. Transgressions of the body, the intellect, the affections are all blotted out. 3. It seems that the Divine atonement puts away the sin of sin—the essence and heart of sin. Sin has its core, its mortal spot, within each iniquity there seems to lie a something more essentially evil than the act itself: this is the inner hate of the mind. Whatever may be the sin of the soul, or the soul of the sin, atonement has been made for it all. The Lord Jesus has not left upon those for whom He has made atonement a single spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, so far as their justification is concerned. He has not left an iniquity for which they can be condemned before the bar of judgment. “Ye are clean every whit” is His sure verdict, and none can contradict it. 4. Not only were all the sins that they had committed put away, but also all their holy things were purged. I do feel so glad that our Lord has atoned for the sins of our holy things. I feel so glad that Jesus has purified our prayers. Many saints spend much time in hearty, earnest cries to God; but even on your knees you sin; and herein is our comfort—that the precious blood has made atonement for the shortcomings of our supplications. We need pardon for our psalms and cleansing for our hymns. Jesus puts away not only our unholy things, but the sins of our holy things also. 5. Once more, on that day all the people were cleansed. This gives great comfort to those of us who love the souls of the multitude. All who believe are justified from all things. II. Now we notice, in the second place, *HOW IT WAS DONE*. 1. The atonement was made first of all by sacrifice. We know that the blood of bulls and of goats could never take away sin; but very distinctly do these point to the sufferings of our Redeemer. The woes He bore are the expiation for our guilt. 2. Notice, next, that the atonement was made not only by the blood of sacrifice, but by the presentation of the blood within the veil. With the smoke of incense and a bowl filled with blood Aaron passed into the most Holy Place. Let us never forget that our Lord has gone into the heavenly places with better sacrifices than Aaron could present. His merits are the sweet incense which burns before the throne of the heavenly grace. His death supplies that blood of sprinkling which we find even in heaven. 3. Furthermore, atonement was made effectual by its application to the thing or person cleansed. The atonement was made for the Holy Place: it was sprinkled seven times with blood. The same was done to the altar; the horns thereof were smeared seven times. So to make the atonement effectual between you and God the blood of Jesus must be sprinkled upon you by a lively faith. 4. Further, inasmuch as no one type was sufficient, the Lord set forth the method of the removal of sin, as far as we are concerned, by the scapegoat. One of two goats was chosen to live. It stood before the Lord, and Aaron confessed all the sins of Israel upon its head. A fit man, selected for the purpose, led this goat away into a land not inhabited. What became of it? Why do you ask the question? It is not to edification. You may have seen the famous picture of the scapegoat, representing it as expiring in misery in a desert place. That is all very pretty, and I do not wonder that imagination should picture the poor devoted scapegoat as a sort of cursed thing, left to perish amid accumulated horrors. But please observe that this is all mere groundless fancy. The Scripture is entirely silent as to anything of the kind, and purposely so. All that the type teaches is this: in symbol the scapegoat, has all the sin of the people laid upon it, and when it is led away into the solitary wilderness, it has gone, and the sin with it. We may not follow the scapegoat even in imagination. It is gone where it can never be found, for there is nobody to find it: it is gone into a land not inhabited—into “no man’s land,” in fact. Stop where the Scripture stops. Sin is carried away into the silent land, the unknown wilderness. The sins of God’s people have gone beyond recall. Where to? Do not ask anything about that. If they were sought for they could not be found; they are so gone that they are blotted out. Into oblivion our sins have gone, even as the scapegoat went out of track of mortal man. “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?”

5. Yet the ceremony was not quite finished; for now everybody who had had a hand in it must needs be washed, so that everybody might be clean. Everybody becomes purged; the whole camp is clean right through. No sin remains upon Him on whom the Lord once laid the iniquities of us all. The great atonement is made, and everything is cleansed, from beginning to end. Christ hath put it all away for ever by the water and the blood which flowed from His riven side. All is purified, and the Lord looks down on a clean camp; and soon He will have them rejoicing before Him, each man in His tabernacle, feasting to the full. III. In the third place, I ask your attention, for a brief interval, to this special point—who did it? The answer is, Aaron did it all. Now fix your eye on the great Antitype of Aaron. There was none with our Lord: He trod the winepress alone. He His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree. He alone went to where the thick darkness covered the throne of God, and none stood by to comfort Him. "All the disciples forsook Him, and fled." Worship our Lord as working salvation by His own single arm. Let that truth abide in your hearts—our High Priest alone has made reconciliation. IV. Lastly, WHAT WERE THE PEOPLE TO DO for whom this atonement was made? There were two things they had to do that day, only I must add that one of them was doing nothing. 1. For the first thing, they had to afflict their souls that day. It was a day of confession of sin. And should not confession be made with sorrowful repentance? To acknowledge sin without grieving over it is to aggravate sin. 2. Not only was it a day of confession, but it was a day of sacrifice. No tender-hearted Israelite could think of that bullock, and ram, and goat dying for him, without saying, "That is what I deserve." When we think of our dying Lord our emotions are mingled: we feel a pleasing grief and a mournful joy as we stand at Calvary. 3. Once more, it was a day of perfect cleansing, and hence, by a strange logic, a day of the affliction of the soul; for, oh! when sin is forgiven, when by Divine assurance we know that God has blotted out our sins like a cloud, then it is we mourn over our iniquities. Afflict your soul when you remember what you once were. 4. On the Day of Atonement they were to afflict their souls, and yet they were to rest. Can these things come together—mourning and resting? I never am so truly happy as when a sober sadness tinges my joy. Nothing is more really sweet than the bitterness of repentance. Nothing is more healthful than self-abhorrence, mixed with the grateful love which hides itself in the wounds of Jesus. The purified people were to rest; they were to rest from all servile work. I will never do a hand's turn to save myself by my own merits, works, or feelings. I have done for ever with all interference with my Lord's sole work. They were assuredly to cease from all sinful work. How can the pardoned man continue in sin? We have done with toiling for the devil now. We will no more waste our lives in his service. We are slaves no longer: we quit the hard bondage of Egypt and rest in the Lord. We have also done with selfish work; we now seek first the kingdom of heaven, and look that all other things shall be added unto us by the goodness of our Heavenly Father. Henceforth we find rest by bearing the easy yoke of Christ. We joy to spend and be spent in His beloved service. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Day of Atonement*:—I. First, THE PERSON WHO WAS TO MAKE THE ATONEMENT. And at the outset we remark that Aaron, the high priest, did it. Inferior priests slaughtered lambs; other priests at other times did almost all the work of the sanctuary; but on this day nothing was done by any one, as a part of the business of the great Day of Atonement, except by the high priest. Old rabbinical traditions tell us that everything on that day was done by him, even the lighting of the candles, and the fires, and the incense, and all the offices that were required, and that, for a fortnight beforehand, he was obliged to go into the Tabernacle to slaughter the bullocks and assist in the work of the priests and Levites, that he might be prepared to do the work which was unusual to him. All the labour was left to him. So Jesus Christ, the High Priest, and He only, works the atonement. There are other priests, for "He hath made us priests and kings unto God." Every Christian is a priest to offer sacrifice of prayer and praise unto God, but none save the High Priest must offer atonement. 1. Then it is interesting to notice, that the high priest on this day was a humbled priest. As Mayer tells us, he wore garments, and glorious ones, on other days, but on this day he wore four humble ones. Jesus Christ, then, when He made atonement, was a humbled priest. 1 did not make atonement arrayed in all the glories of His ancient throne in heaven. Upon His brow there was no diadem, save the crown of thorns; around Him was cast no purple robe, save that which He wore for a time in mockery; in His hand was no sceptre, save the reed which they thrust in cruel contempt upon Him; He

had no sandals of pure gold, neither was He dressed as king; He had none of those splendours about Him which should make Him distinguished among men. Oh! my soul, adore thy Jesus, who when He made atonement, humbled Himself and wrapped around Him a garb of thine inferior clay. 2. In the next place, the high priest who offered the atonement must be a spotless high priest; and because there were none such to be found, Aaron being a sinner himself as well as the people, you will remark that Aaron had to sanctify himself and make an atonement for his own sin before he could go in to make an atonement for the sins of the people. We have a spotless High Priest; we have one who needed no washing, for He had no filth to wash away. 3. Again, the atonement was made by a solitary high priest—alone and unassisted. No other man was to be present, so that the people might be quite certain that everything was done by the high priest alone. God kept that holy circle of Calvary select to Christ, and none of His disciples must go to die there with Him. O glorious High Priest, thou hast done it all alone! 4. Again it was a laborious high priest who did the work on that day. It is astonishing how, after comparative rest, he should be so accustomed to his work as to be able to perform all that he had to do on that day. I have endeavoured to count up how many creatures he had to kill, and I find that there were fifteen beasts which he slaughtered at different times, besides the other offices, which were all left to him. He was ordained priest in Jeshurun, for that day, toiled like a common Levite, worked as laboriously as priest could do, and far more so than on any ordinary day. Just so with our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, what a labour the atonement was to Him! It was a work that all the hands of the universe could not have accomplished; yet He completed it alone.

II. THE MEANS WHEREBY THIS ATONEMENT WAS MADE (see vers. 5, 7-10). The first goat I consider to be the great type of Jesus Christ the Atonement; such I do not consider the scapegoat to be. The first is the type of the means whereby the atonement was made, and we shall keep to that first. 1. Notice that this goat, of course, answered all the pre-requisites of every other thing that was sacrificed; it must be a perfect, unblemished goat of the first year. Even so was our Lord a perfect Man, in the prime and vigour of His manhood. 2. And further, this goat was an eminent type of Christ from the fact that it was taken of the congregation of the children of Israel, as we are told at the fifth verse. The public treasury furnished the goat. So Jesus Christ was, first of all, purchased by the public treasury of the Jewish people before He died. Thirty pieces of silver they had valued Him at—a goodly price; and as they had been accustomed to bring the goat so they brought Him to be offered, not indeed with the intention that He should be their sacrifice, but unwittingly. Indeed, Jesus Christ came out from the midst of the people, and the people brought Him. Strange that it should be so! “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not”; His own led Him forth to slaughter; His own dragged Him before the mercy-seat. 3. Note, again, that though this goat, like the scapegoat, was brought by the people, God’s decision was in it still. Mark, it is said, “Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat.” I conceive this mention of lots is to teach that although the Jews brought Jesus Christ of their own will to die, yet, Christ had been appointed to die; and even the very man who sold Him was appointed to it—so saith the Scripture. Christ’s death was fore-ordained, and there was not only man’s hand in it, but God’s. 4. Next, behold the goat that destiny has marked out to make the atonement. Come and see it die. The priest stabs it. Mark it in its agonies; behold it struggling for a moment; observe the blood as it gushes forth. Ye have here your Saviour. See His Father’s vengeful sword sheathed in His heart; behold His death agonies; hear His sighs and groans upon the Cross; hark to His shriek, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani,” and you have more now to think of than you could have if you only stood to see the death of a goat for your atonement. As the blood of the goat made the atonement typically, so thy Saviour dying for thee made the great atonement for thy sins, and thou mayest go free. 5. But mark, this goat’s blood was not only shed for many for the remission of sins as a type of Christ, but that blood was taken within the veil, and there it was sprinkled. So with Jesus’ blood, “Sprinkled now with blood the throne.” III. We now come to the EFFECTS. 1. One of the first effects of the death of this goat was the sanctification of the holy things which had been made unholy. Is it not sweet to reflect that our holy things are now really holy? 2. But observe, the second great fact was that their sins were taken away. This was set forth by the scapegoat. 3. One more thought concerning the effects of this great Day of Atonement, and you will

observe that it runs throughout the whole of the chapter—entrance within the veil. Only on one day in the year might the high priest enter within the veil, and then it must be for the great purposes of the atonement. Now the atonement is finished, and you may enter within the veil: “Having boldness, therefore, to enter into the holiest, let us come with boldness unto the throne of the heavenly grace.” The veil of the Temple is rent by the atonement of Christ, and access to the throne is now ours. IV. Now we come to notice, in the fourth place, what is OUR PROPER BEHAVIOUR WHEN WE CONSIDER THE DAY OF ATONEMENT. You read at ver. 29, “And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls.” That is one thing that we ought to do when we remember the atonement. “Law and terrors do but harden,” but methinks the thought that Jesus died is enough to make us melt. Then, better still, we are to “do no work at all,” as ye find in the same verse (29th). When we consider the atonement, we should rest, and “do no work at all.” Rest from your own righteousness; rest from your toilsome duties: rest in Him. “We that believe do enter into rest.” As soon as thou seest the atonement finished, say, “It is done, it is done!” Then there was another thing which always happened. When the priest had made the atonement, it was usual for him, after he had washed himself, to come out again in his glorious garments. When the people saw him they attended him to his house with joy, and they offered burnt-offerings of praise on that day: he being thankful that his life was spared, and they being thankful that the atonement was accepted; both of them offering burnt-offerings as a type that they desired now to be “a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God.” The atonement is finished; the High Priest is gone within the veil; salvation is now complete. He has laid aside the linen garments, and He stands before you with His breastplate, and His mitre, and His embroidered vest, in all His glory. Hear how He rejoices over us, for He hath redeemed His people, and ransomed them out of the hands of His enemies. Come, let us go home with the High Priest; let us clap our hands with joy, for He liveth; the atonement is accepted, and we are accepted too; the scapegoat is gone, our sins are gone with it. Let us, then, go to our houses with thankfulness, and let us come up to His gates with praise, for He hath loved His people, He hath blessed His children, and given unto us a day of atonement, and a day of acceptance, and a year of jubilee. (*Ibid.*) *Moses and Christ; the Day of Atonement*:—

I. THE DIVINE REDEEMER. 1. His humiliation. 2. His sinlessness. II. THE DIVINE SACRIFICE. 1. God admits vicarious suffering into His righteous rule. (1) Involuntarily we suffer for one another. (2) The finer instincts of the animal world lead the parent to endure suffering and death to shield and save the young. (3) Voluntarily, man interposes to rescue his brother by his own loss and suffering. (4) In proportion to the spiritual nobility of men we find voluntary vicarious suffering in their hearts and lives. 2. The sacrifice of Christ avails to remove all condemnation.

III. THE HUMAN WORSHIPPER—our sinning, seeking selves. 1. Without personal participation everything will be as nothing. 2. The spirit in which we must participate is that of penitence and faith. (*W. Clarkson, B.A.*) *The Day of Atonement*:—Now, what did such a ritual mean? If it be said that the Divine forgiveness depended upon such a day, then why did the world wait twenty-five hundred years before its appointment? If absolutely necessary, why was it not enjoined upon Abraham, and especially upon Adam in Paradise? What is the meaning of sacrifice? What relation does it bear to forgiveness of sin? We observe—1. God’s character is not changed by sacrifices. He neither regards sin with less hatred, nor loves the sinner more because of these. The Sacrifice of Calvary—compared with which all others are as shadows to the light—was the natural outcome of the Divine nature, rather than the means of changing that nature (Rom. v. 8; 1 John iv. 9, 10). 2. These mere sacrifices possessed no intrinsic value. If there were a value in these, it must have been either to Him in whose name they are offered, or to man for whom they were offered. Happily for us the Scriptures settle both points (Isa. i. 13; Micah vi. 6-8; Psa. xl. 6, li. 16, 17). Thus much, therefore, follows: these sacrifices were not transactions of any intrinsic value to God, in themselves considered. Every part of that ceremonial for the childhood age was a Divine lesson, pointing to a greater offering and sacrifice to come. While God accommodated His laws to the perception of childhood, He made use of them to proclaim eternal truths—a fact we shall see illustrated in the lessons of the Day of Atonement. In it we have—I. THE DIVINE TESTIMONY AGAINST SIN. II. THE BASIS OF ATONEMENT. III. THE NECESSITY FOR A PERFECT HIGH PRIEST. (*D. O. Mears.*) *The climax of sacrificial worship—the Day of Atonement*:—I.

THERE IS THE VOLUNTARY HUMILIATION OF THE HIGH PRIEST. The Day of Atonement was the high priest's day: he undertook the atoning work, and no man was to venture near the Tabernacle (ver. 17) while he was engaged in it. The first thing required of him was humiliation. II. THE HIGH PRIEST WAS REQUIRED NEXT TO PERFUME THE AUDIENCE-CHAMBER WITH INCENSE. Prayer is the beginning, middle, and end of the redemptive work. It seems evident from this that we must put away those business-like illustrations of atonement as a hard bargain driven on the one side and paid literally and in full on the other. We must allow a sufficient sphere in our conceptions for the play of intercession and appeal, and remember that while it is a God of justice who is satisfied, He proves Himself in the transaction a God of grace. III. AFTER THE INCENSE THERE IS BROUGHT IN THE BLOOD, FIRST OF HIS OWN SIN-OFFERING AND THEN OF THE PEOPLE'S. The blood of Jesus Christ is symbolised by both, and the act of sprinkling it before God is also to be attributed to our great High Priest. The law of mediation is that self-sacrifice stimulates the element of mercy in the Judge. And if it be objected that surely God does not require such an expensive stimulant, the reply is, that the self-sacrificing Son and the stimulated Father and Judge are in essence one. The act is consequently a Divine self-sacrifice to stimulate the element of mercy towards man and make it harmonise with justice. IV. BUT THE HIGH PRIEST WAS EXPECTED NOT ONLY TO SECURE THE PARDON OF SIN, BUT ALSO TO PUT IT AWAY BY THE DISMISSAL OF THE SCAPEGOAT. For the pardon of sin is not all man needs. He requires sin to be put away from him. Now this putting away of sin was beautifully represented in the dismissal of the scapegoat. This second sin-offering, after having the sins of the people heaped upon its head by the priestly confession, is sent away in care of a faithful servant in the wilderness, there to be left in loneliness either to live or die. Here again we have a type of Jesus. V. THE HIGH PRIEST HAVING THUS DISPOSED OF SIN, RESUMED HIS GLORIOUS GARMENTS AND OFFERED THE BURNT-OFFERINGS FOR HIMSELF AND THE PEOPLE. It is Christ who offers this burnt-offering, and is the Burnt-offering. That is to say, He has offered for men a perfect righteousness, as well as afforded us a perfect example. Our consecration to God is ideally to be a perfect one—but really how imperfect! But Christ is made unto us sanctification; we are complete in Him; we are accepted in the beloved; and we learn and try to live as He lived, holy as He was holy. Moreover, upon the burnt-offering was presented the fat of the sin-offering, the Lord thus emphasising His satisfaction with the atonement, and His acceptance of it. VI. THE WASHING OF THE THREE MEN OFFICIATING ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT CONVEYS SURELY THE IDEA OF THE CONTAMINATING POWER OF SIN. (*R. M. Edgar, M.A.*) *The Day of Atonement*:—I. THE AUTHORITY FOR THE DAY AND ITS MEASURES. 1. Both authorised of God (vers. 1, 2). 2. Both, then, Divinely important. (1) In regard to the definiteness of the day. (2) In regard to the meaning and order of its ceremonies. II. THE TYPICAL MEANING OF THE JEWISH ATONEMENT-DAY. 1. The Divinely stated reason for its appointment (ver. 16). (1) The fact of sin and the necessity for its expiation by blood. (2) Sin necessitates atonement if it is to be pardoned. (3) This fact bespeaks the antagonism of sin against the Divine will, and the holiness and righteousness of the Divine character. 2. The Divinely appointed measures for its observance. (1) In respect to the agent. (2) In respect to the measures themselves. Lessons: 1. The hatefulness, heinousness, and guiltiness of sin are here shown. 2. God's desire to provide for the removal of its guilt, and the prevention of its consequences, demonstrated. 3. The comprehensiveness of the provision in the atonement. (*D. C. Hughes, M.A.*) *The Day of Atonement*:—I. NOTE THE CHIEF SERVICES OF THE DAY OF ATONEMENT. II. SHOW THAT THE SACRIFICES THEN OFFERED WERE STRICTLY PROPITIATORY. When you consider the two goats as together constituting the sin-offering, you must receive as the only satisfactory account of the transaction that which sets forth the scapegoat as exhibiting the effects of the expiation which was represented by the death of the other. The sins of the people were laid upon the head of the scapegoat, and borne away to the wilderness; but this scapegoat was a part of the sin-offering, and therefore, by combining the parts of the sin-offering, you have before you both the means and the effect: you have the means, the shedding of blood without which there is no remission; you have the effect, the removal of guilt, so that iniquity, though searched for, can nowhere be found. It seems certain that such was the view entertained by the Jews, who were wont to treat the scapegoat as actually an accursed thing. Though not commanded by the law, they used to maltreat the goat Azazel—for by this name was the scapegoat known—to spit upon him, and pluck off his hair. Thus they acted towards the goat

as they acted towards Christ, who, in a truer sense than the Azazel, was "made sin for us." And if further proof were needed of the idea which the Jews themselves attached to the ceremony of the imposition of hands on the head of the victim, it is to be found in the forms of confession which their writers have transmitted as used ordinarily in expiatory sacrifices. It appears, for example, that when an individual presented his own sacrifice, he laid his hands on the head of the offering, saying amongst other things, "Let this victim be my expiation"—words which were universally considered equivalent to an entreaty that evils which ought in justice to have alighted upon the offender might fall upon the sacrifice. And it is every way worthy of note, as marking the traditional idea of the great day of expiation, that the modern Jews, as well as the ancient, hold fast the notion of a strict propitiatory atonement. Where, then, can be the ground for doubting, that by "atonement," in our text, is to be understood what we understand by it in Christian phraseology; that there was effected a real removal of guilt and its consequences from the Jewish transgressor, when on the great and solemn day of expiation, in compliance with a Divine statute an atonement was made for the children of Israel for all their sins once every year? III. And here we bring you back to the main argument we have all along had in hand—THE INFERRING FROM THE CHARACTER OF THE LEGAL SACRIFICE THAT OF THE CHRISTIAN. If you can once show that the sacrifices of the law typify the sacrifice of Christ, and that the sacrifices of the law were strictly propitiatory, it follows as an irresistible deduction—notwithstanding the cavils of philosophising sects—that the Lamb of God died truly as a Sin-offering, making, by His death, atonement for the world. Indeed, if no reference were made to the Old Testament, the language of the New is so explicit that nothing but the most determined prepossession could fail to find in it the doctrine that Christ's death was a propitiatory sacrifice. But the connection between the two dispensations, and therefore the two Testaments, is so strict in every point, that it were no just examination of the gospel which would keep the law out of sight; therefore we come to examine more definitely the correspondence between the sacrifice of the Saviour and those which have just been reviewed. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The Day of Atonement* :—By referring to ver. 29, you will find that this Day of Atonement was appointed for "the seventh month." Seven, as you remember, is a symbol of completeness. This location of these solemnities in the seventh month, would therefore seem to refer to the fact noted by the apostle, that it was only "when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son to redeem them that were under the law." He lived when the world was sufficiently at peace to give Him a hearing—when the human mind was maturely developed, and competent to investigate His claims—when the ways were sufficiently open for the immediate universal promulgation of His gospel—and when the experience of four thousand years was before men to prove to them how much they needed such a Teacher and Priest as He. His appearance, therefore, to take away our sins, was in "the fullness of time"—in the Tisri or September of the world—when everything was mature and ripe. He put the Day of Atonement in "the seventh month." You will also notice that this great expiation service occurred but once in a complete revolution of time—"once a year." A year is a full and complete period. There is no time which does not fall within the year. And the occurrence of the Day of Atonement but once in the entire year plainly pointed to another great fact noted by the apostle, that "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." There is no repetition in His sacrificial work. "Christ was once offered"; and in that one offering of Himself, all the eras of human existence were condensed and included. It was the event of this world's year. It is also to be observed, that the atoning services of this remarkable day had respect to the whole nation at once. They were "to make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation." Most of the other offerings were personal, having respect to particular individuals, and to special cases of sin, uncleanness, or anxiety. But on this day the offerings were general, and the atonement had respect to the entire people. This recalls another great evangelic truth, namely, that Christ "died for all"—"gave Himself a ransom for all"—"by the grace of God tasted death for every man"—and "is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world." I. It was TO THE HIGH PRIEST A DAY WHICH IMPOSED NUMEROUS INCONVENIENCES, ANXIETIES, AND HUMILIATIONS. And so was it with our great High Priest when He undertook to expiate the guilt of man. Separated from His heavenly home, He became a suffering, laborious, self-denying servant. No gold glittered upon His brow, or tinkled with His steps, or mingled its glory with royal colours

to adorn His robe. No jewelry sparkled on his shoulders or on His breast. No chariots of grandeur bore Him to the place of His mighty deeds of love. And thus amid privations, humiliations, and anxieties which made Him sorrowful even unto death, did He go through with the services of the great day of the world's expiation. 2. It was to the high priest a day which imposed all its services upon him alone. Thus, when Jesus undertook the expiation of the world's guilt, "of the people, there was none with Him." Isaiah says, "I looked, and there was none to help." His "own arm brought salvation." He "His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree." 3. The Day of Atonement was to the high priest also a very oppressive and exhausting day. His duties, in his complete isolation, were really crushing. So laborious and trying was his work that after it was over the people gathered round him with sympathy and congratulation that he was brought through it in safety. But it was only a picture of that still more crushing load which was laid upon our great High Priest when making atonement for the sins of the world. None among all the sons of the mighty could ever have performed the work which He performed, and lived. All His life through there was a weight upon Him so heavy, and ever pressing so mightily upon His soul, that there is no account that He ever smiled. Groans and tears and deep oppression accompanied Him at almost every step. And when we come to view Him in His agonising watchings and prayers in the garden, and under the burdens of insult and wrong which were heaped upon Him in the halls of judgment, and struggling with His load along that dolorous way until the muscles of His frame yielded, and He fell faint upon the ground, and oppressed upon the Cross until His inmost soul uttered itself in cries which startled the heavens and shook the world; we have an exhibition of labour, exhaustion, and distress, at which we may well sit down and gaze, and wonder, and weep, in mere sympathy with a sorrow and bitterness beyond all other sorrow. II. We come now to LOOK AT THE ATONEMENT ITSELF. Here we find that several kinds of offerings were to be made. The object was to make the picture complete, by bringing out in different offerings what could not all be expressed by one. They were only different phases of the same unity, pointing to the one offering of Jesus "Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God." There is a multiplication of victims, that we may see the amplitude and varied applications of the one great atonement effected by Christ Jesus. The most vital, essential, and remarkable of these atoning services was that relating to the two goats, as provided for in vers. 7-10, 15-17, 21, 22. One of these goats was to be slain as a sin-offering, and the other was to have the sins of Israel laid upon its head, and then to be taken away alive and left in the wilderness. The one typified the atonement of Christ in its means and essence; the other the same atonement in its effects. III. A word now with REGARD TO THE PEOPLE TO BE BENEFITED BY THE SERVICES of this remarkable day. That the services and offerings of this day were meant for the entire Jewish nation is very clear and distinct. But not all were therefore reconciled and forgiven. The efficacy of these services, in any given case, depended upon the individual himself. The atonement day was to be a day of contrition, of weeping, of soul-sorrow for sin, of confession, reformation, and return to God, a day of heart-melting and charity. Without these accompaniments its oblations were vain, its incense useless, its solemnities but idle ceremonies. And, as it was with the type, so it is with the Antitype. Would you, then, have Christ's atoning day to be a blessing to thy soul, come to it with a moved and melting heart; come to it with thy spirit bowed for thy many, many sins; come to it as the humbled prodigal came back to the kind father he had wronged; come to it as the poor heart-broken publican came, smiting thy guilty breast and crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *The ceremonies of the Day of Atonement*.—The Day of Atonement was one of the most interesting, as it was perhaps the most solemn and impressive, of all the holy days of the Jews. For seven days previously the high priest had been making preparation for taking up his abode within the Temple precincts. The services of the day began with the first grey light of dawn; for then the high priest, after performing the ordinary morning service, arrayed himself in his fine white linen garments and prepared to go within the awful sanctuary where the Shechinah dwelt. But first he must confess his own sins, and so he lays his hand upon the head of the bullock, which was to be for his sin-offering, and said, "O Jehovah, I have committed iniquity, I have sinned, I and my house." Ten times in this prayer he repeated the name of Jehovah—a word which had an awful significance

in the ears of every Jew ; and every time he repeated it, those who stood near cast themselves with their faces to the ground, while the multitude responded, "Blessed be the name ; the glory of His kingdom is for ever and ever." "After some other ceremonies," says Edersheim, "advancing to the altar of burnt-offering, he next filled the censer with burning coals, and then ranged a handful of frankincense in the dish destined to hold it. Every eye was now strained toward the sanctuary as, slowly bearing the censer and the incense, the figure of the white-robed priest was seen to disappear within the Holy Place—the place that had never been visited by any other except the high priest, and which he had not seen for a full twelve-month. After that nothing further could be seen of his movements. The curtain of the most Holy Place was folded back, and he stood alone and separated from all the people in that awful gloom of the holiest of all, only lit up by the red glow of the coals in the priest's censer." What a sight met his eyes as they became accustomed to the gloom!—the mercy-seat ; on either side the outstretched wings of the cherubim ; and above them the visible presence of Jehovah in the cloud of the Shechinah. He whose name alone, in after-years, the Jews dared not pronounce was there, and upon him, revealed in the cloud, gazed the white-robed priest as he stood alone in that awful presence. Then, when the smoke of the incense filled the place, came this prayer from the lips of the priest : "May it please thee, O Lord our God, and the God of our fathers, that neither this day nor during this year any captivity come upon us. Yet if captivity befall us this day or this year, let it be to a place where the law is cultivated. May it please Thee, O Lord our God, and the God of our fathers, that want come not upon us either this day or this year. But if want visit us this day or this year, let it be due to the liberality of our charitable deeds." After further prayer and other ceremonies the priest returned to the people, and then began perhaps the most unique and interesting service of the day—the sending away of the scapegoat. Earlier in the day two goats, as similar in all respects as could be found, were chosen ; lots were cast upon their heads, one being reserved for a sacrifice, the other to be sent into the wilderness. Upon the horns of the latter a piece of scarlet cloth or "tongue" was tied, telling of the guilt it had to bear. After the sacrificing of the first animal the priest laid both his hands upon the head of the second and confessed the sins of the people. "O Jehovah, they have committed iniquity ; they have transgressed ; they have sinned," &c. "Then," as Edersheim further says, "a strange scene would be witnessed. The priest led the sin-burdened goat out through Solomon's Porch and, as tradition has it, through the Eastern Gate, which opened upon the Mount of Olives. Here an arched bridge spanned the intervening valley, and over it they brought the goat to the Mount of Olives, where one specially appointed took him in charge." The distance between Jerusalem and the beginning of the wilderness was divided into ten stations, where one or more persons were placed to offer refreshment to the man leading the goat, and then to accompany him to the next station. At last they reached the wilderness, and their arrival was telegraphed by the waving of flags from one station back to another until in a few minutes "it was known in the Temple and whispered from ear to ear that the goat had borne upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited." (*F. E. Clark.*)

Spiritual significance of the ceremonies on the Day of Atonement:—We cannot regard the symbolical arrangements of this Day of Atonement without feeling that it is a matter of supreme importance, of urgent, indispensable necessity, that some means be devised whereby man may be separated, and separated for ever, from his sins—their guilt, their power, their memory. All the ceremonies of this day declare this fact, as do all the arrangements of the old economy, and indeed all the utterances of God's Word. What is the meaning of those abortive attempts to discover some scapegoat, who, if he cannot wholly bear, may at least share the burden and the blame? The religions and the irreligions, the beliefs and the infidelities of men declare the same fact with unmistakable plainness. Nothing can be more evident than that men have the haunting consciousness of sin, from which they seek to escape ; some in one way, some in another. Man everywhere has knowledge enough of sin to feel that it would be indeed a good thing to be separated, if not from sin itself (and from that the sinner is not willing to part) at least from those wretched, miserable consequences which follow in its train. Turning away from the vain and fruitless efforts of men in this direction, we find that what is impossible with men is possible with God. We find, indeed, that God has interposed in a very wonderful way to secure this result—the separation of man from sin, and all the hateful and deadly consequences of sin, and that by the sacrifice and

substitution of His own Son, our Saviour. And the arrangements of the Day of Atonement were Divinely ordered that they might prefigure, in its character and consequences, that true atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ—that complete and finished sacrifice offered once for all by Him, “who is a priest, not according to the law of a carnal commandment, but according to the power of an endless life” —“a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek.” And, as we have already remarked, our attention is especially directed to two things—the means of atonement, and the result, the consequences of atonement; in other words, to the sacrifice for sin, and the separation from it. We have a picture of the one in the goat slain and the blood sprinkled; we have a picture of the other in the leading forth into the wilderness of the sin-burdened goat, to return no more. The truth to which there is need for the most express testimony to be borne is the atonement of Christ—atonement by means of blood-shedding and blood-sprinkling. Whether men bear or forbear, whether it seem to them wisdom or foolishness, we must everywhere proclaim the same truth, that the only atonement made known in God’s Word is atonement by sacrifice by the substitutionary sacrifice of God’s own Son. (*T. M. Morris.*) *The garments of the priest:*—They were of pure white linen. The ordinary “golden garments” were laid aside, for only the vestments of snowy purity must be worn when the high priest enters into the Holy of Holies. The most extraordinary care, too, must be taken to avoid defilement of every kind. Five times during the Day of Atonement must the priest bathe his whole body; ten times must he wash his feet; many times must he change his garments. These precautions, at first thought, seem to our modern views unnecessary and finical, but when we remember Him to whom all these symbols point, what type can express His purity who was holy, harmless, and undefiled; who lived among sinners yet without sin; who lived in leprous Judæa yet without spot or taint of leprosy? The sinlessness of Christ! What can typify it? The snow, perhaps we think, as it falls from the laboratory of the clouds, each flake a crystal of exquisite form and all covering with a fleecy mantle every brown, dirty, unsightly thing in the landscape. But the snow itself, when it touches earth, soon becomes defiled. The lamb washed in the running stream soon loses his purity; the high priest himself, even for a single day, could not keep his garments unpolluted, but must change them and wash his flesh over and over and over; but our High Priest came and lived among sinners for three-and-thirty years, and yet knew no sin. Pure as was the priest’s linen robe, it is but a poor, faulty representative of the robe of righteousness of our High Priest. (*F. E. Clark.*) *There shall be no man in the Tabernacle . . . when he goeth in to make an atonement:*—When sin is to be accounted for, we must face God each for himself, coming alone, one by one, into His presence. Friends and loved ones can be with us in sinning, but not in answering for sin. Help and cheer and sympathy can be given to us by our fellows, up to the time when we are to meet God and give an account of ourselves; then “every one of us shall give account of himself to God,” then “every man shall bear his own burden,” then “every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour,” then “every man’s work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.” How we lean on human helpers: children on parents, husband and wife on one another, scholar on teacher, people on pastor, friend on friend! But there shall be no one of these earthly supporters with us when we enter the holy place of God’s presence, seeking an atonement for our sins. Then we must stand alone, face to face with God. (*H. C. Trumbull.*) *Trusting in the Substitute:*—A good old Christian woman in humble life was once asked, as she lay on her dying pillow, the ground of her hope for eternity. She replied, with great composure, “I rely on the justice of God”; but seeing that the reply excited surprise, added, “Justice, not to me, but to my Substitute, in whom I trust.” *A proffered substitute:*—During the Franco-Prussian War, an English clergyman was travelling in the district occupied by the German army. There he met a German gentleman, whose route lay in the same direction, and quickly becoming friends, they resolved to accompany each other. As they walked out one day they saw a small company of soldiers come out of the camp with a handcuffed prisoner in their midst. Wondering what was about to be done, they waited until the party had approached, then asked the officer what they were going to do with that man. “Shoot him.” “Why?” “He has been robbing the dead, and by the law of the land he must die.” “Poor man,” said the clergyman, “is he prepared to die?” “I do not know,” replied the officer, “but you can speak

to him if you like." The minister at once took advantage of the permission, and began to speak to the prisoner about his soul. He had not spoken long when the wretched man burst into tears. The clergyman stopped, thinking something he had said had broken him down, but he was speedily undeceived by the man exclaiming, "Oh, sir, I am not weeping because of anything you have said, or because I am going to die; I am weeping because I do not know what will become of my wife and children when I am gone." These words touched the old German gentleman, who said as he gazed with tears in his eyes at the prisoner, "I tell you what. I have no one in the world to feel my loss. I shall take your place, and as your law demands a life I shall lay down mine." And turning to the officer, he continued, "Now, please, take off these handcuffs and put them on me." "But," interposed the Englishman, "think what you are doing; is there no one who will miss you?" "No one." "Well," said the officer, as soon as he had recovered from his amazement, "I have no power to do what you wish, but you can come to the camp and hear what the general says." But it turned out the general had not the power: the general, however, said, "The Crown Prince is here, and he has the power." To the Crown Prince they went, and when he heard the strange story he was very much affected. "Our laws," he said, "will not admit of a substitute being executed for another, but though I cannot take your life, I can give you a present of this man's life. He is yours." The prince could pardon, but God cannot pardon without a Substitute, even Jesus who died in our stead that we might live. (*W. Thompson.*) *Need for the great atonement:*—Mr. Hardcastle, when dying, said, "My last act of faith I wish to be to take the blood of Jesus, as the high priest did when he entered behind the veil; and when I have passed the veil I would appear with it before the throne." So, in making the transit from one year to another, this is our most appropriate exercise. We see much sin in the retrospect; we see many a broken purpose, many a misspent hour, many a rash and unadvised word; we see much pride and anger, and worldliness and unbelief; we see a long track of inconsistency. There is nothing for us but the great atonement. With that atonement let us, like believing Israel, end and begin anew. Bearing its precious blood, let us pass within the veil of a solemn and eventful future. Let a visit to the fountain be the last act of the closing year, and let a new year still find us there. (*J. Hamilton, D.D.*) *Christ's anæsthesia for the remembrance of sin:*—If the Creator of the universe has provided in nature an anæsthesia for physical pain, shall He not much more, in grace, provide one for moral pain? There is a wholesome and necessary pain for both the physical and the moral natures—the pain which gives warning of the disease, or indicates its presence; but when the physician comes, his province is to effect the cure without the pain as far as possible, as it is a retarding element in the process of recovery, exhausting the patient's strength, which is all needed for recuperation. Just such a useless devitalising pain for the soul would be the eternal regretful remembrance of sin, therefore it is that God declares, "Your sins and transgressions shall not be remembered nor come into mind"; "Blessed is he whose transgression is covered"; "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." "As far as the east is from the west, so far will I remove thy transgressions from thee"; "I will not look upon them nor remember them." And yet in this age of questioning people say, "How shall I not remember when science tells me memory is indestructible?" As well may the patient in his incredulity ask, "How shall I not feel the knife penetrating to the bone, when the mere scratch of a pin gives me pain?" Christ is the anæsthesia for the soul's regretful remembrance of sin. *Sinners always ready to conceal their sin:*—It is said of the elephant that before he drinks in the river he troubleth the water with his feet, that so he may not see his own deformity, and it is usual with such as are well struck in years, not so much to mind the looking-glass, lest therein they behold nothing but hollow eyes, pale cheeks, and a wrinkled front, the ruins of a sometime more beautiful visage. Thus it is that men by nature are hardly drawn to the confession of their sins, but every man is ready to hide his sins by excusing them with Aaron, by colouring them with fair pretences, as did the Jews, by laying them on others as Adam did, or by denying them with Solomon's harlots; they are ready to decline sin through all the cases, as one said wittily: in the nominative by pride, in the genitive by luxury, in the dative by bribery, in the accusative by detraction, in the vocative by adulation, in the ablative by extortion, but very loth to acknowledge them in any case, very hardly brought to make any confession of them at all. (*T. Adams.*) *Value of repent-*

ance :—In the country of Arabia, where almost all trees are savoury, and frankincense and myrrh are even as common firewood, styrax is sold at a dear rate, though it be a wood of unpleasant smell, because experience proveth it to be a present remedy to recover their smell, who before had lost it. We all of us have lived in the pleasures of sin, have our senses stuffed and debilitated, if not overcome; and the best remedy against this malady will be the smelling to styrax, the unsavoury and unpleasant smell of our former corruptions; thus David's sin was ever before him, and St. Augustine (as Possidonius noteth), a little before his death, caused the penitential psalms to be written about his bed, which he still looking upon, out of a bitter remembrance of his sins, continually wept, giving not over long before he died. This practice will work repentance not to be repented of. (*J. Spencer.*) *Christian's confession of sin*:—You may have noticed in the biography of some eminent men how badly they speak of themselves. Robert Southey, in his "Life of Bunyan," seems at a difficulty to understand how John Bunyan could have used such depreciating language concerning his own character. For it is true, according to all we know of his biography, that he was not, except in the case of profane swearing, at all so bad as most of the villagers. Indeed, there were some virtues in the man which were worthy of all commendation. Southey attributes it to a morbid state of mind, but we rather ascribe it to a return of spiritual health. The great light which shone around Saul of Tarsus brighter than the midday sun, was the outward type of that inner light which flashes into a regenerate soul, and reveals the horrible character of the sin which dwells within. Believe me, when you hear Christians making confessions which seem to you to be unnecessarily abject, it is not that they are worse than others, but that they see themselves in a clearer light than others. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Hindrances to repentance removed*:—They who have water running home in conduit pipes to their houses, as soon as they find a want of that which their neighbours have in abundance, by and by they search into the causes, run to the conduit-head, or take up the pipes to see where they be stopped, or what is the defect, that so they may be supplied accordingly. Even so must every man do, when he finds that the grace of repentance flows into other men's hearts, and hath no recourse or access into his soul, by and by sit down and search himself what the cause should be, where the hindrance is that stays the course, where the rub lies which stoppeth the grace of repentance in him, seeing they that live (it may be) in the same house, sit at the same table, lie in the same bed, they can be penitent for their sins, sorry that they have offended God, and so complain in bitterness of soul for their sins; but he that had the same means, the same occasions, more sins to be humbled for, more time to repent, and more motives to draw him to the duty, is not yet moved with the same, nor any way affected with the sense of sin; this must needs be matter of high concernment to look about him. (*J. Spencer.*) *True repentance*:—I think that men look upon repentance and humiliation before God very much as they do upon a voyage from the tropics to the North Pole. Every single league as they advance toward the Arctic region they leave more and more behind them greenness, and fruit, and warmth, and civilisation, and find themselves more and more in the midst of sterility, barrenness, ice, and barbarism. I think that men repent toward the frigid zones. They think that to go to God is dreary and desolate in the extreme. It is not. The sinner is an Esquimaux! He lives in ice and burrows underground, and is but little better than a beast. But if by any means he becomes fired with a conception of a better clime, and leaving his hibernating quarters, he takes the ship Repentance and sails toward the torrid zone, at every league he is surprised by the new forms of vegetation by which he is surrounded. He has seen oak-trees only about as high as his knee. Not long after he sets out on his voyage he is astonished to see them as high as his head. By and by, as he draws near the tropics, he is lost in wonder and ecstasy to see them lifting themselves far above him in the air. And with what satisfaction does he compare the delightful home that he has found with the miserable one that he has left behind. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Two kids of the goats for a sin-offering*.—*Christ typified by the two goats*:—I. AS TO THE GOAT THAT WAS PUT TO DEATH. To die as a sacrifice for human guilt was the great end of Christ's life and mission into our world. Thus was He represented by the goat that was sacrificed. Notice how the figure was still further carried out. II. IN THE GOAT WHICH WAS KEPT ALIVE. 1. Over the head of this goat the sins of the people were confessed, and on it symbolically laid. Thus Jesus came to be our Surety and Substitute. 2. Iniquities, transgressions, and sins, were confessed and laid on the scapegoat. Showing us here the extent

of Christ's sacrifice for all kinds of guilt, whether arising from neglect of God's commands or the wilful violation of His righteous prohibitions. In the sacrifice of Christ there was an atonement for every kind of sin, and for all grades and classes of sinners. 3. The scapegoat was dismissed into the wilderness with the imputed iniquity of the people upon it. Thus has Jesus truly borne our guilt away. He has obtained for a world of transgressors the offer of pardon. For the polluted race of Adam the means of purity. For condemned and dying sinners the favour of God and the gift of eternal life. Notice—III. HOW THE BENEFITS OF THE SCAPEGOAT WERE CONFERRED UPON THE PEOPLE. Aaron was to lay both his hands upon the head of the scapegoat, and there confess all the sins of the people. How clearly does this show us the appointed medium by which we enjoy the salvation of Christ. 1. There must be implicit faith or confidence in His person and sacrifice. 2. Faith in Jesus will ever be accompanied by sincere repentance. It will be connected with ingenious confession, deep contrition, entire self-abasement, and self-loathing before God, with earnest forsaking of the paths of impenitence and sin. Application: 1. We see here the connection between sin and death. Sin deserves death, exposes to death; where it is unforgiven it will involve in eternal death. "The soul that sinneth," &c. 2. In Christ's death is the only real sacrifice for sin: "He died for our sins." What a glorious truth! How precious! how momentous! 3. Faith is the only medium of securing to the soul the benefits of that death. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *Lessons*:—1. Of the divers lots appointed for men, of some unto life, some unto death. 2. Ministers should have a great care to govern their families. 3. Christ alone sufficient to save us. 4. Remission of sins not procured by any strength in man, but by faith in Christ. 5. Righteousness not by the words of the law, but by faith only in Christ. (*A. Willet, D.D.*) *Moral observations*:—1. Divine secrets not curiously to be searched into. 2. To approach and draw near before God with holiness and reverence. 3. Of the force and efficacy of prayer. 4. Of the profit and fruit of fasting. 5. Remission of sins only granted to the penitent. 6. Evil thoughts and lusts to be cast away. (*Ibid.*) *The two goats*:—The two goats really formed one and the same figure—one was slain and one was led off into the wilderness; but to typify that the figure was one, and the same, they must both be exactly alike, they must cost the same price, they must be bought at the same time; one was slain for sin, the other was led away far into the wilderness, bearing the sins of all the people laid upon His head. Our Lord, in His life and death, combined both these types. He was slain for sin and bears the sin away. There is one element of this ceremonial that we must carefully note. The idea of vicarious sacrifice is very prominent. This element must never be lost out of our doctrine of the atonement. An atonement without the sacrifice is no atonement. "According to the law I may almost say all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from the shedding of blood is no remission." Bring every beautiful thought and theory into the atonement that belongs there: the example, the upholding of law, the lustral effect on man's moral nature, are all there; but this is there too. Through the vicarious sacrifice of the God Man our sins are borne for ever away into the wilderness, and are remembered no more against us. (*F. E. Clark.*) *The two goats—various interpretations*:—There have been disputes about the interpretation of this. I may state that Faber, a very acute and able critic upon Leviticus, thinks that the one goat was sacrificed for sin—representing Christ's death; that the scapegoat was dedicated to the evil spirit—representing Christ put into the power of Satan to be tempted in the wilderness. The reason that he thinks so is that the word for goat of "scape" is *azazel*; and that name was applied to the fallen spirit by the Jews. And therefore Faber thinks it was one goat for a sacrifice—to denote Christ's atonement; the other goat let loose to Satan, or sent away to Satan—to represent the Saviour given up into the hands of the wicked one to be tempted for a season. The second interpretation is by Bush, the American commentator, a man of great sagacity and talent; and he thinks that the one goat that was slain as a sacrifice represented Christ's atonement for us, but that the other goat represented the Jewish races let loose, bearing the fearful responsibility of having trodden under foot the precious blood of Christ, and crucified the Son of God, and stained their name and their nation with the infamy of that crime; and that they, a blasted race, driven into the desert, were represented by the scapegoat that was here let go. And he thinks on the same ground, that when the lots were cast, and Jesus was condemned and Barabbas was let go, that that was the carrying out of the same great symbol—Barabbas, the representative of the Jews, let go, but branded with an inexpiable crime; and

Jesus, the Great Atonement, sacrificed for the sins of all that believe. These criticisms, however, are more plausible than true. I do think the old-fashioned interpretation is the just one, and there is no valid reason for superseding it: that the one goat sacrificed on the altar was the symbol of Christ our Saviour or Atonement sacrificed for us; and that the other goat let loose into the desert was the symbol and representation to the children of Israel of Jesus rising from the dead, bearing the sins that He had exhausted, entering into heaven, and there ever living to make intercession for us. I know there are difficulties even in accepting the last of these; but those difficulties, if they do not completely vanish, are much diluted when you notice the accompaniments or the rites by which this goat was let loose into the wilderness: that the priest was to lay his hands upon the head of the scapegoat—the one that was presented alive; over it he was to confess all the sins of the children of Israel, and then this scapegoat was let loose with the sins of Israel upon its head. Now, the very phraseology that is applied to the scapegoat is applied to Jesus: “Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away”—that carrieth away—“the sins of the world.” And I cannot conceive a more beautiful type of Christ our Saviour, or a more expressive exhibition of the mode in which we become interested in Him than that of the high priest laying his hand upon his head, transferring the sins of Israel to it, dismissing it, and the sins blotted out, no more remembered, carried into a desert, passed away from the reminiscences of Israel and of God for ever. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*)

The cloud of the incense.—*Intercession of Christ*.—I. THE DOCTRINE OF THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST. 1. As typically exhibited under the law. 2. As actually fulfilled in Christ. He not only suffered on the Cross, but ascended; not on His own account, but ours. Illustrated by common analogies: as an advocate appears on behalf of his clients; a king on behalf of his subjects; a general as representative of his troops; a priest at the altar as representative of whole body of worshippers; so Christ appears as the representative of all His believing people. As our King He appears in beauty; as Captain of salvation appears victorious; as Elder Brother; as Priest, Counsellor, Advocate. Grand expression of His love. Not content to offer one life on the Cross. He consecrates His new existence. Though raised to the throne of reverence, does not overlook His little flock (*John xvii.*).

II. THE BENEFITS WE DERIVE FROM IT. 1. The forgiveness of our sins. “If any man sin.” After all done for us, we are guilty and undeserving. But while our sins are crying out against us on earth, Christ is pleading in heaven. 2. Relief of our sorrows. Christ possesses a capacity of sympathy, especially in mental distresses, tenderness of conscience, &c. Hannah prayed, but Eli’s heart was not touched with feeling of her infirmity. 3. The acceptance of our duties. These are maimed and imperfect. Enough evil in them to render them offensive and displeasing to God. But Christ presents them (*Rev. viii. 2*). 4. The frustration of spiritual enemies. Satan is the avenger, but Christ is our Advocate. “Peter, I have prayed for thee.” (*S. Thodey.*)

Vers. 20–22. **The goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities.**—*The scapegoat a type of Christ*.—I. THE TYPICAL SACRIFICE HERE ENJOINED. 1. Appointed by God. Therefore an atonement fully equal to our guilt; a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice; an oblation which satisfies the unbending law and even the infinitely holy mind of the great Jehovah, which leaves justice nothing to ask for, and the redeemed sinner nothing to dread. 2. The efficacy of the sacrifice enjoined in it must be traced to the Divine appointment. II. THE CONDUCT WHICH AARON WAS COMMANDED TO OBSERVE WITH RESPECT TO IT. The mere appointment of these two animals as a sin-offering was not sufficient to atone for the transgressions of the Israelites: the one must be slain, and the other must be presented before the Lord and have a particular ceremony performed over it, before Israel can be pardoned. 1. A part of this ceremony consisted in the confession of guilt. We are called on to be very earnest in our efforts to become acquainted with the full extent of our depravity; to be often looking into our hearts and reviewing our lives, and to be particular and minute in acknowledging the sins which we discover there. 2. It tells us that the high priest, after having confessed over the goat the sins of the people, was to transfer them to the victim before him; he was to put them on its head, thus intimating that their guilt no longer rested on them but on the devoted animal on which his hands were laid. The spiritual meaning of this part of the ceremony is plain. It was designed to teach us figuratively the same blessed truth which has now been revealed to us without a figure, and which constitutes the substance and glory of the gospel, that “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being

made a curse for us "; that "He bare our sins in His own body on the tree "; that the Lord hath laid on Him "the iniquities of us all." III. THE BENEFITS WHICH RESULTED FROM AARON'S OBEDIENCE TO THE INJUNCTIONS GIVEN HIM. After the appointed confession had been made over it, and the sins of the people put upon its head, the goat was to be sent away into an uninhabited wilderness. 1. This was undoubtedly designed to show us the completeness of that pardon of sin which Christ has purchased by the sacrifice of Himself for the believing sinner. It is a pardon extending, not to a few iniquities, but to all. 2. But the pardon the believing penitent receives through Christ is an everlasting, as well as a complete pardon. This is strongly implied in the text. The goat was not only to bear away all the iniquities of the children of Israel, but it was to bear them away into "a wilderness," into "a land not inhabited "; a land cut off from all other countries ; a desolate, unvisited, and almost inaccessible region, in which the devoted animal was to be let go, and where it would remain unseen and forgotten till it perished. The Israelites therefore had not only the assurance that all their past iniquities were pardoned, but they were taught also by this ordinance that they had no reason to fear the return of them, or the revoking of this pardon. (*C. Bradley, M.A.*)

The scapegoat.—I. THE SCAPEGOAT REPRESENTED THE SUBSTITUTION OF CHRIST IN THE PLACE OF SINNERS. II. THIS SUBSTITUTION OF CHRIST HAS MADE AMPLE SATISFACTION FOR SIN. III. THIS ATONEMENT BY CHRIST EXTENDS TO ALL SINS. 1. Iniquities. Some say these refer to our original depravity. 2. Transgressions. The violations of the positive laws of God. 3. Sins. Neglect of His holy commands. Perhaps they are used to denote that the scapegoat bore away sins of every kind and description. IV. THAT CHRIST, AS TYPIFIED BY THE SCAPEGOAT, HAS EFFECTED SUBSTITUTION FOR ALL PEOPLE. V. IN WHAT WAY THE BENEFITS OF CHRIST'S SUBSTITUTION ARE RECEIVED. 1. Faith is requisite. 2. Sins confessed and repented of. Application: 1. Man's criminal and dangerous condition. Laden with iniquities and sins. 2. The only way of avoiding the terrible results of transgression. "By Jesus Christ." 3. The only means by which the blessings of salvation are to be received. By true repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. 4. Let all men thus avail themselves of the redemption that is in Christ. (*J. Burns, D.D.*)

The scapegoat.—I. THE INNOCENT VICTIM. 1. Innocent. Had no sins of its own to bear. Thus Jesus Christ (1 Pet. ii. 24). With sins of its own how could it atone for the sins of others? No man selected who might ceremonially bear the sins of the people away, and then return after being ceremonially purified. 2. Divinely selected. Chosen by lot. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." Jesus was the Lamb of God. The lamb of Divine selection. Hence how great should be our confidence in this Saviour! 3. Representative. Goat generally regarded as representing evil propensities, and therefore as specially illustrating the wicked (Matt. xxv. 32-46). So Jesus took our nature. Likeness of men and of sinful flesh (Phil. ii. 7; Rom. viii. 3). II. THE IMPUTED TRANSGRESSIONS. 1. Of all the people, and all their iniquities. Vast number, variety, &c., of their sins. Jesus gave Himself a ransom for all. Died for our sins. 2. Transferred from the people by the will of God. By the grace of God Jesus tasted death for us. Our sins laid upon Him according to the mercy of God. 3. Transferred by the priest with confession. They were to be acknowledged as the people's sins. Confession of sin a condition of our acceptance. Not that God does not know, but that the act of confession brings our guilt home more to our own heart, and tends to promote humility and an earnest desire for mercy. Besides, God has willed it (chap. v. 5; Hos. v. 15), and added promises of mercy to such as obey (chap. xxvi. 40-42; Prov. xxviii. 13). And pardon follows (Psa. xxxii. 5; 1 John i. 9). 4. Bearing this burden, the goat was then lead away into the wilderness. Away from the camp, whither it might never return to defile it. The iniquity to be clean gone for ever. The people not to be punished for the sins thus "removed far" from them. Christ bore our reproaches, and was crucified outside the camp. III. THE DELIVERED PEOPLE. 1. Deliverance from sin the greatest deliverance. Other deliverances being temporal, but this eternal; others bodily, &c., this spiritual. 2. It would promote happiness. They felt that a great load had been removed. Rejoiced in spiritual liberty. The joy of imputed innocence. Now looked upon with favour, their sins being borne away. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." 3. It would excite gratitude. Otherwise they would have had to answer for their sins. Apply this to Jesus, and those who are saved from wrath through Him. Learn—1. Christ Jesus was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. 2. He made Him to be

sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made, &c. 3. The duty of confession and personal faith. (*J. C. Gray.*) *The scapegoat*:—I. THAT THE SEPARATION OF MAN FROM HIS SINS IS A SUBJECT OF TREMENDOUS MOMENT. 1. The moral struggles of mankind show the necessity of man being separated from his sins. 2. The influence of sin on human nature shows this. It has mortalised our bodies, clouded our intellects, polluted our affections, burdened our consciences, enfeebled and enslaved our powers. 3. The intervention of Christ shows this. II. THAT A PENITENTIAL APPROACH TO GOD THROUGH SACRIFICE IS THE DIVINE METHOD OF SEPARATION. 1. Sin deserves death. 2. Through the death of another, the sinner's death may be avoided. III. THAT THE SEPARATION OF MAN FROM HIS SIN, IF EFFECTED THROUGH THE TRUE SACRIFICE, IS COMPLETE. (*Homilist.*) *Man's need of a scapegoat*:—As soon as man sins, and his conscience becomes at all alive to the fact, and troublesome on account of it, he begins at once to look around for some "scapegoat." The sinner always feels, after the first flush and excitement of sin have passed away, and the fire of its passion has died out, that it would be an exceedingly desirable thing to put the guilt, burden, and consequences of sin as completely away from himself as possible. Now that the fleeting pleasure of sin has been extracted and only the bitter dregs remain, the sinner would willingly and by any means get quit of them, and so he casts around a glance of inquiry, hoping to discover some "scapegoat" with whom he may share the blame of sin, or upon whom he may put it altogether. The first sinners, in this matter, set an example which all sinners from that time to this have diligently copied. Adam shabbily put the blame upon his wife, and Eve foolishly put the blame upon the serpent, and both impiously sought to put the blame upon God. Do we not in the offering of these vain excuses see our first parents looking about for a "scapegoat," who shall at least share the burden of their recently contracted and still unacknowledged and unabolved guilt? And thus has it been with all sinners from that time to this. Still do we find men seeking to explain the fact of sin, and to excuse the guilt of sin, by referring to something outside of themselves. A man, for instance, commits some sin: his conscience calls him to some kind of reckoning. And what, under such circumstances, does he do? He does not, it is to be feared, cry out in penitence before God, "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight," but instead of this he looks about for some "scapegoat." His conscience charges him with having told a lie. Well, if it were a lie, it was a very white one; it was certainly told with the very best of intentions; it was to obviate some very unpleasant consequences which would have injuriously affected not only himself but others. A man gets drunk. He cannot but admit that he was "overtaken," or "overcome," but he would like all his friends to know that the circumstances were very peculiar, indeed, quite exceptional; it was the excitement of the company which led him on, and not the love of the drink. Another man takes some unfair advantage of his neighbour: Well, he dares to say that his neighbours have often taken advantage of him. He swears: 'Tis an old habit into which he unconsciously lapses. He indulges in ungovernable outbursts of anger: Well, he always had a hasty temper, and no one could know how much he had to annoy and provoke him. You remind a man that he is very seldom found in God's house on the Lord's day, and might be very often met in the fields, or on the river or rail: He knows it isn't altogether the right sort of thing to do; he certainly was brought up differently at home and at school; but then he is so pent up during the week that he wants a little fresh air on Sunday. You expostulate with another who, while rarely or never running into any actual excess, spends a great deal too much time and money in the public-house. He excuses himself by reminding you that persons in his station have not the same comforts at home which those have who live in larger houses and on larger incomes; and that those who expostulate or condemn would moderate their complaints if they knew more about the matter. And thus, but that time would fail us, I might go through a much longer catalogue, and show you how in every case men, as soon as their conscience becomes troublesome, look about instinctively for some scapegoat. They endeavour to discover something in their character, their temperament, their circumstances, their education, their companionship, their occupation—something, in short, outside of themselves, which shall bear in some degree the blame and guilt of sin, which all the while they are indulging and cherishing. All such attempts are vain. All such excuses empty and unavailing. These scapegoats break down under the burden imposed upon them, and have no power to carry the guilt, the bitterness, the clinging memory of one single sin into the wilderness of oblivion. It is my pleasing task to direct your

attention to the true Scapegoat: the provision which God Himself has made for separating the sinner from his sins, and from all their terrible consequences, finally and for ever. A provision which in its Divine fullness is sufficient to meet, and more than meet, all the exigencies of our sinful nature. (*T. M. Morris.*) *Heathen imitations of the scapegoat*:—From this law of God, no doubt, did spring that custom among the heathen who, offering sacrifices, used to ban and curse the head of the beast offered in sacrifice with these words, "That if any evil be so come, either upon the sacrificers themselves, or upon the whole country of Egypt, it would please the gods to turn all upon that head." The Massilians also yearly used to make an atonement or expiation for their city with some holy man, whom, decked and set out with holy garments and with garlands, after the manner of a sacrifice, they led through the city, and putting all the evils upon his head that might any way hang over their city, they cast him into the sea, sacrificing of him so unto Neptune, speaking these words with great solemnity, "Sis pro nobis piaculum" ("Be thou an expiation for us"). Thus the heathen caught at things, but not in a right manner, whereby we may well see what a darkness it is to be deprived of the light of the Word of God. In like manner receiving it from the doctrine of the old Fathers, by the tradition of Noah's sons, that there should in time come a Man who, taking upon Him the sins of all men, should become a sacrifice for the salvation of all men; and notwithstanding the manner how this should be, they used in great extremities and perils—as plagues, famine, wars, &c.—to offer up men to their gods to appease their wrath thereby. So in Livy we read Quintus Curtius did in a time of pestilence; the Decii, father and son, in a time of hard war with the Latines and Samnites; Codrus, king of the Athenians, in Lycurgus; Menæceus in Euripides, and the daughters of Erecteus offered themselves to be sacrificed for their country. So Ahaz (2 Kings xvi.); Manasseh (chap. xxi.), and the King of Moab (chap. iii.), their own sons. This was a great mistaking you plainly see, and therefore let it move you to send up thankful thoughts to God for your better knowledge and understanding. (*Bp. Babington.*) *The solitary sin-bearer*:—The solitude of the sin-bearer is something altogether distinct from the solitude of the Holy One. The solitude of holiness separated Him from sinners; but that separation, which made Him lead in His humanity a strange, lonesome life, yet brought Him into such full contact with all the glorious beings and the realities of the spirit-world, that such a solitude could hardly be looked upon with any considerable regret, or be the source of actual pain. The solitude of the sin-bearer is different from that of the representative of holiness and purity. Consider the causes of this solitude. 1. Wherever sin exists it is an isolating principle. Its tendency is to induce seclusion and separation, to shut the person who is possessed of it from all connection with that which is outside itself. 2. The scapegoat was to bear upon its head all the confessed iniquity of the children of Israel, and to bear it into a land of separation. Christ was the Scapegoat of the human family. In the Epistle to the Hebrews we read that He, by the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself to God. The scapegoat finds the land of separation at last, all alone in the darkness. He bore our sins into the land not inhabited. No witnessing spirit can find them there; no denizen of those dreary regions can rediscover them. They are lost sight of by man; the angels find them obliterated from their view; and God Himself has turned His back upon them, and left them in the land of separation. (*W. Hay Aitken, M.A.*) "And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited":—When confessed sins are fairly laid upon Him who is appointed to bear them, they will never come back to those who confessed them. He will carry them "unto a land not inhabited"—a land where there are no talebearers or gossips to keep the story of those sins alive. Forgiven sins will be also forgotten sins: in the day of final account, not one of them will appear against the transgressor. Sins which are not laid upon the Scapegoat must be faced by the sinner in the presence of the universe. Sins which the Scapegoat has borne away into the land not inhabited cannot then be found in all the universe. God Himself will have forgotten them: for His promise is that those sins and those iniquities He will remember no more for ever. (*H. C. Trumbull.*)

CHAPTER XVII.

VERS. 2-16. This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded.—*Laws for holy living*.—From chap. xvii. to chap. xxiii. everything relates to the duties, qualities, and associations of individuals in private life. This fact, coming as it does right after the great Day of Atonement, is very suggestive. It indicates that God contemplates much more respecting us than the mere pardon of our sins; that justification is not the whole intent of the Saviour's redemptive services; and that there is to be a personal righteousness and purification which rests upon our own exertions. "In Him was life," and His "life is the light of men." Without some degree of conformity to Him, our religion is but a shadow and a name. For so it is written, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Let me invite attention, then, more specifically to the means and elements of a good and holy life, as they are shadowed forth in the chapters before us. I. The principal, and, perhaps, the only permanent provision contained in this chapter, is THAT WHICH RESPECTS THE MANNER OF TREATING BLOOD. No matter how or from what animal it came, it was always to be looked upon with consideration. The use of blood was not forbidden because it was unclean, but because it was sacred. It represents life. It is that by which life was redeemed. Now, it is easy to see how a law of this sort would work to solemnise, restrain, and soften the heart of a conscientious Jew. It would keep the solemn atonement before him whithersoever he went. The very huntsman would be met by it in the deep recesses of the forest. And if we desire to learn what constitutes the deepest essence of a Christian life, we here have it most beautifully typified. We must keep in view the blood of atonement. It is our clear and continual recognition of what Jesus has done for us that weakens temptation, disposes to duty, and prompts to the deeds of righteousness. I remember to have met with an affecting little incident in Roman history connected with the death of Manlius Capitolinus, a renowned consul and general, who was once proudly hailed as the saviour of Rome. It happened one night when the Gauls threatened to overwhelm the Capitol, that he bravely took his stand upon the wall where they came on with their attack, and there fought singly and alone until he had repelled them, and so saved the city from destruction. It so occurred that this distinguished man was afterwards accused of some great public fault, and put upon trial for his life. But just as the judges were about to pass sentence upon him, he looked up at the walls of the Capitol, which towered in view, and with tears in his eyes pointed to where he had fought for his accusers, and perilled his life for their safety. The people remembered the heroic achievement, and wept. No one had the heart to say aught against him, and the judges were compelled to forbear. Again he was tried, and with the same result. Nor could he be convicted until his trial was removed to some low and distant point, from which the Capitol was invisible. And so, while Calvary is in full view, in vain will earth and hell seek to bring the Christian into condemnation. One serious look at the Cross, and at the love which there, unaided and alone, when all was dark and lost, interposed for our salvation, is enough to break the power of passion at once, and to strike dead every guilty proceeding. II. Passing to chap. xviii., we find sundry laws, but all bearing upon two general points. The first RELATES TO THE CUSTOMS OF THE EGYPTIANS, FROM AMONG WHOM THE JEWS CAME, AND OF THE CANAANITES, WHOSE LAND THEY WERE TO INHERIT. Israel was to be a holy nation, and therefore was not to follow the ways of the unclean. The greatest danger of a purified man arises from his old habits and associations. It is not easy to turn a stream quite out of the channel in which it has been flowing for ages. It is a mighty work to revolutionise a character which has been forming for years, or to tear quite away from a long-continued routine which includes all our recollections of infancy, and in which our life took its chief attractions. The sow that has been washed, still has strong affections for the mire. The second grand element of a good Christian life, therefore, is a complete and thorough reformation with regard to old habits. If we have been in close intimacy with the vile, we must withdraw from their communion, and keep aloof from their wicked ways. If we have been giving way to bad passions, we must cut ourselves off from the occasions of our transgressions, and beware of putting ourselves into circumstances which invite temptation. III. The other specifications of chap. xviii. all RELATE TO SEXUAL PURITY. They typically refer to the necessity of a proper government of the affections. We may love, but we must love virtuously. We may cherish the most tender regards, but they must not rest

upon criminal hopes. Our warmest feelings may be enlisted and indulged, but we must be cautious that they do not betray us into sin and shame. Even the secret thought of unchasteness, the hidden incontinent wish, the impure desire, the cherished hope of unclean gratifications, must be spurned and crucified as criminal before God, and crushed as an enemy to the peace and good of society. The heart must be kept with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. It is God who saith, "Defile not yourselves in any of these things." IV. We come now to chap. xix. Here we have quite a list of moral precepts, setting forth an extensive code of Christian righteousness. The provisions of the preceding chapter were negative; these are mostly positive. In the one God shows us how we are to "cease to do evil"; in the other He instructs us how to "do well." V. A remark or two, now, upon chap. xx. We have been contemplating the laws of holy living. In this chapter we have God's threatenings against those who violate them. It is a chapter of penalties. God is not only our adviser, but our Lord and Judge. His commands are not only gracious counsels, but authoritative laws. The gospel is indeed glad tidings—glad tidings of great joy. It is a call of mercy from the heavens to the suffering and the lost. But it is a call to holiness. And whilst it is a glorious savour of life unto life to them that yield to it, and walk in its light, it is a fearful savour of death unto death to those who despise or disobey it. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *Various regulations in chaps. xvii.—xxii.*—First, in regard to those passages which caution the people against vices of special enormity, we must remember that they were about to be settled in dangerous proximity to peoples who were thoroughly corrupted by these very vices, and therefore the cautions were not by any means unnecessary. Accustomed as most of us are to the pure air of Christian society, in which, notwithstanding all the selfishness and sin that still abound, vices such as these are "not so much as named," and the very possibility of them seems out of the question, it is difficult for us to imagine how different was the condition of society before these purifying influences were brought to bear on it, which issued from Mount Sinai first, and afterwards from Gennesaret's shore and "the place called Calvary." And when we find such warnings in the Book of Leviticus, we ought in the first place to feel humbled by the thought of the fearful lengths to which sin unrestrained by Divine grace will carry its wretched victim; and, in the second place, to lift up our hearts in gratitude to God, that in these latter days, though evil still abounds, we are nevertheless protected from such outrages to our moral and spiritual nature as those to which even the chosen people were exposed in the ancient times. On the other hand, it is pleasant to find in these chapters the evidence that the Mosaic Law came in many respects nearer to the morality of the New Testament than most people are willing to admit (see chap. xix. 9, 10, 32-34). Finally, it is interesting to notice in these regulations, and throughout the entire law, the care which is taken to keep religion and morality closely wedded and welded together. "I am the Lord your God" is continually put forth, not as a creed article, but as an unanswerable argument for strictest obedience and the most scrupulous integrity. The relations of privilege which the people enjoyed are continually set forth as increasing their responsibility. "To whom much is given, of them much shall be required," is a principle taken for granted all through. (*J. M. Gibson, D.D.*) *Before the Tabernacle of the Lord.*—*The grand principle of right action—God in everything:*—The principle which underlies this stringent law, as also the reason which is given for it, is of constant application in modern life. There was nothing wrong in itself in slaying an animal in one place more than another. It was abstractedly possible—as, likely enough, many an Israelite may have said to himself—that a man could just as really "eat unto the Lord" if he slaughtered and ate his animal in the field, as anywhere else. Nevertheless this was forbidden under the heaviest penalties. It teaches us that he who will be holy must not only abstain from that which is in itself always wrong, but must carefully keep himself from doing even lawful or necessary things in such a way, or under such associations and circumstances, as may outwardly compromise his Christian standing, or which may be proved by experience to have an almost unavoidable tendency toward sin. The laxity in such matters which prevails in the so-called "Christian world" argues little for the tone of spiritual life in our day in those who indulge in it, or allow it, or apologise for it. It may be true enough, in a sense, that, as many say, there is no harm in this or that. Perhaps not; but what if experience have shown that, though in itself not sinful, a certain association or amusement almost always tends to worldliness, which is a form of idolatry? Or—to use the apostle's illustration—what if one be

seen, though with no intention of wrong, "sitting at meat in an idol's temple," and he whose conscience is weak be thereby emboldened to do what to him is sin? There is only one safe principle, now as in the days of Moses: everything must be brought "before the Lord"—used as from Him and for Him, and therefore used under such limitations and restrictions as His wise and holy law imposes. Only so shall we be safe; only so abide in living fellowship with God. (*S. H. Kellogg, D.D.*) **Peace-offerings unto the Lord.**—*Dedication of food to God*:—Very beautiful and instructive was the direction that the Israelite, in the cases specified, should make his daily food a peace-offering. This involved a dedication of the daily food to the Lord; and in his receiving it back again then from the hand of God, the truth was visibly represented that our daily food is from God; while also, in the sacrificial acts which preceded the eating, the Israelite was continually reminded that it was upon the ground of an accepted atonement that even these everyday mercies were received. Such also should be, in spirit, the often neglected prayer before each of our daily meals. It should be ever offered with the remembrance of the precious blood which has purchased for us even the most common mercies; and should thus sincerely recognise what, in the confusing complexity of the second causes through which we receive our daily food, we so easily forget that the Lord's Prayer is not a mere form of words when we say, "Give us this day our daily bread"; but that working behind, and in, and with, all these second causes, is the kindly providence of God, who, opening His hand, supplies the want of every living thing. And so, eating in grateful, loving fellowship with our Heavenly Father that which His bounty gives us, to His glory, every meal shall become, as it were, a sacramental remembrance of the Lord. We may have wondered at what we have read of the worldwide custom of the Mohammedan, who, whenever the knife of slaughter is lifted against a beast for food, utters his "*Bism Allah*" ("In the name of the most merciful God"); and not otherwise will regard his food as being made *halal* or "lawful"; and no doubt in all this, as in many a Christian's prayer, there may often be little heart. But the thought in this ceremony is even this of Leviticus, and we do well to make it our own, eating even our daily food "in the name of the most merciful God," and with uplifting of the heart in thankful worship toward Him. (*Ibid.*) **For the life of the flesh is in the blood.**—*The Scriptural doctrine of blood*:—"Blood" is one of the characteristic, regent words of Scripture, occurring in it more than four hundred times. A word so recurrent must mean something fundamental. In fact, it is the blood of Christ which is the basis of Christianity, the very pivot of the Christian religion. 1. First of all, let us ponder what in light of modern physiology is certainly a remarkable Scripture. Moses, in forbidding the eating of blood, assigns for his prohibition the following reason: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (ver. 11). 1. The fact asserted: "The life (soul) of the flesh is in the blood." (1) This is, in fact, one of the instinctive beliefs of humanity; and instinct is often prophetic, holding latent history. How thoroughly the idea that blood is the seat of life has taken possession of the race is evident from such instinctive idioms as these: "shedder of blood," "man of blood," "imbrue in blood," "bloody-minded," "blood-thirsty," "avenger of blood," "blood-guiltiness," "cold-blooded," "prince of the blood royal," "blooded-stock," "blood-relation," "next of blood," "consanguinity," "sanguine of success," "sanguine temperament," &c., &c. So that marvellous diviner and formulator of human instincts, Shakespeare—the word "blood" occurs seven hundred and thirty-one times in his plays—for example:—

"Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red."

(*"Macbeth," II. ii.*)

Again—

"Sluic'd out his innocent soul through streams of blood:
Which blood, like sacrificing Abel's, cries,
Even from the tongueless caverns of the earth,
To me, for justice and rough chastisement."

(*"King Richard II.," I. i.*)

So England's poet-laureate—

“Defects of doubt, and taints of blood.”

(“In Memoriam,” liii.)

Again—

“Through all the years of April blood,”

(“In Memoriam,” cviii.)

So Virgil—

“His purple life (*purpuream animam*) he poureth forth.”

(“Æneid,” ix. 349.)

So Homer, and very frequently, thus—

“The soul comes floating in a tide of gore,”

(“Iliad,” iv. 537.)

Again—

“He sobs his soul out in the gush of blood.”

(“Iliad,” xvi. 419.)

Once more—

“And the soul issued in the purple flood.”

(“Iliad,” xvi. 624.)

So the Scriptural writers; for example: “The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground”; “Earth, cover not thou my blood”; “Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God”; “Precious shall their blood be in His sight”; “All the righteous blood shed upon the earth from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zachariah the son of Barachiah”; “I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.” “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” The blood being thus instinctively conceived as the seat of life, and so the representative of the soul or person, no wonder that blood has ever been regarded as a sacred thing. Here is the secret of the Mosaic prohibition to eat blood, a prohibition frequently repeated, and in vers. 10-14 with solemn minuteness of detail. The blood being regarded as the symbol and home of the personality, to eat it was to be guilty of sacrilegious cannibalism. Here is the key to that chivalrous, pathetic incident in David's life: “Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this; is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?” (2 Sam. xxiii. 15-17). But the Divine prohibition was not peculiar to the Jews. A millennium before Moses, when the new stock of humanity, just escaped the Deluge, was still young, God commanded Noah, saying, “Every moving thing that liveth shall be food for you. . . . But flesh with the life (soul) thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat” (Gen. ix. 1-4). As the prohibition antedated the Mosaic Dispensation, so it postdated it. A score of years after Christ was crucified, a controversy arose in the Church at Antioch respecting the subjection of Gentile converts to circumcision and the Mosaic institutions generally (Acts xv. 1-35). So much for the instinctive belief that the life, or soul, of the flesh is in the blood. (2) And modern science remarkably confirms this instinctive belief. The blood, in respect to its composition, consists of two principal parts: a liquid plasma, and countless microscopic corpuscles, or blood-discs, floating in it, by far the larger part of which are red, and the rest colourless. The office of the colourless corpuscles, called “Leucocytes,” is not yet distinctly understood. This thing, however, must be said about them, When blood is taken from the living system, these leucocytes, or white corpuscles, if kept at something like their normal temperature, present for some time remarkable life-like phenomena; they protrude and retract numerous arms or processes, and even move about from place to place, as though things of life; in fact, so much do the motions of these corpuscles resemble the protean changes in figure and motions of the microscopic Rhizopod called “Amoeba,” that they have received the name, amoeboid movements. The red corpuscles constitute nearly one half of the mass of the blood, tinging it so thoroughly as to give it its red colour. The office of these red globules, or blood discs, is, in the main, to serve as carriers of oxygen. To use the words of Prof. Flint, the red corpuscles “are respiratory organs; taking up the greater part of the oxygen which is absorbed by the blood in its passage through the lungs, and conveying it to the tissues, where it is given up, and its place supplied by carbonic acid.” One more remark must

be made about these red blood discs. Although the diagnosis of blood stains is not yet sufficiently advanced to enable us in all cases to discriminate with absolute certainty between the blood corpuscles of man and those of all mammals, yet it is far enough advanced to enable the microscopical expert to pronounce, in certain cases, with accuracy on the character of blood stains in murder trials; thus converting these tiny globules, having a diameter of only $\frac{3}{1000}$ of an inch, into solemn, resistless witnesses. The melancholy Dane is right:

"Murder, though it have no tongue, will speak,
With most miraculous organ."

(*"Hamlet,"* II. ii.)

Ay, "blood will tell." Thus the blood is in an eminent sense the seat and organ of life. The language of Hervey, the demonstrator at least, if not the discoverer, of the circulation of the blood, is striking: The blood is the "primigenial and principal part, because that in it and from it the fountain of motion and pulsation is derived; also because the animal heat or vital spirit is first radicated and implanted, and the soul takes up her mansion in it. . . . The blood is the genital part, the fountain of life, *primum vivens, ultimum moriens*." It is a solemn thing to observe the rhythmical systole and diastole of the heart, especially as recorded by that delicate instrument, the sphygmograph. The blood is a very river of life, the arterial and venous systems of circulation constituting an intricate network of canals, making the body a corporeal Amsterdam or human Venice. Each corpuscle is a barge, moving with various rates of speed in different parts of the body, toiling through the capillaries at the rate of two inches a minute, rushing through the arteries at the rate of from twelve to twenty feet a second, ceaselessly carrying on the organic functions of the body by perpetually exchanging freight, depositing at the depot of this and that tissue oxygen, and taking up carbonic acid. What money is to society, that blood is to the bodily system; it is the means of exchange, or the circulating medium. The scientific accuracy of the assertion, "the life of the flesh is in the blood," is strikingly shown in such facts as blood-letting, strangling, fainting, *pyæmia*, or blood-poisoning, and especially transfusion—a sometimes beneficent surgical operation, in which blood from a strong and healthy person, or from one of the lower animals, is injected into the veins of a feeble or anæmic patient. The life or soul of the flesh is in the blood. Thus the Bible of Scripture and the Bible of Nature is one; Scripture announcing a truth, Nature echoing it. 2. The rite appointed: "And I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls." (1) "I have given it to you upon the altar." Blood is emphatically the characteristic thing in the Levitical ritual, the very basis of the old sacrificial economy. Particularly is this true of the eminently sacred rites of the paschal lamb, the sin-offering, the day of atonement, and the mercy-seat; all the significance of these elaborate ceremonies turned on the element of blood. Indeed, the writer of the letter to the Hebrews, summing up the Old Covenant in respect to ritual, expressly says, "Almost all things are by the law purified with blood; and without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22). The Old Testament is in very truth a scarlet dispensation. (2) "To atone for your souls." To atone; literally, to cover, hide, shelter. But in what sense to atone? Certainly not in the heathen sense of placating as with presents, or expiating as by offering a *quid pro quo*; but in the gracious sense of reconciling by sacrificial, vicarious intercession. 3. The reason assigned: "For it is the blood that maketh atonement"—i.e., by the life thereof, in virtue of the soul in it. (1) "It is the blood that maketh an atonement." It atones not, of course, absolutely; for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away the consciousness of sins. But the blood atones, so to speak, constructively, pictorially, prophetically. (2) "For the life (or soul) of the flesh is in the blood." And this on the principle that the blood, as being the seat of the life, is the representative of the person. Life for life, soul for soul; this is the meaning of the old sacrificial ritual. And it is all based on the admitted physiological principle—the life of the flesh is in the blood. II. And now we have the key to the Scriptural doctrine of blood. 1. The blood of Jesus Christ it is which is the antitype or fulfilment of the blood of the Levitical victims. To prove this forms a great part of the argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Take chap. ix., verses 13, 14, as a typical specimen of the argument. 2. The blood of Jesus Christ is the antitypal, real atonement for our souls on the same principle which held under the Old Dispensation—the principle

of vicarious representation. That is to say, Christ's blood, as being the vehicle and representative of His own personality, was vicariously shed; and in this way He became the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. This, then, is the Scriptural doctrine of blood. It is based on the ancient Mosaic affirmation and on the modern scientific observation—"The life of the flesh is in the blood." How significant now the New Testament allusions to the efficacy of Christ's blood. For example: "Purchased with His own blood"; "Set forth as a propitiation through faith in His blood"; "Justified by His blood"; "Redemption through His blood"; "Made peace through the blood of His Cross"; "Boldness to enter into the holiest through the blood of Jesus"; "The blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel"; "The blood of the everlasting Covenant"; "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin"; "Washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," &c. Thus blood is the scarlet thread winding through both the Covenants, their crimson rubric. This, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter—blood is the natural, physiological basis of the Scriptural doctrine of the Atonement. "Science" inexorably holds us to "orthodoxy" in the prime, pivotal article of the Christian religion. (*G. D. Boardman, D.D.*) **Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh.**—*Restrictions respecting the use of blood*:—The moral and spiritual purpose of this law concerning the use of blood was apparently twofold. In the first place, it was intended to educate the people to a reverence for life, and purify them from that tendency to bloodthirstiness which has so often distinguished heathen nations, and especially those with whom Israel was to be brought in closest contact. But, secondly, and chiefly, it was intended everywhere and always to keep before the mind the sacredness of the blood as being the appointed means for the expiation of sin, given by God upon the altar to make atonement for the soul of the sinner, "by reason of the life" or soul with which it stood in such immediate relation. Not only were they, therefore, to abstain from the blood of such animals as could be offered on the altar, but even from that of those which could not be offered. Thus the blood was to remind them, every time they ate flesh, of the very solemn truth that without shedding of blood there was no remission of sin. The Israelite must never forget this, even in the heat and excitement of the chase; he must pause and carefully drain the blood from the creature he had slain, and reverently cover it with dust: a symbolic act which should ever put him in mind of the Divine ordinance—that the blood, the life, of a guiltless victim must be given in order to the forgiveness of sin. A lesson lies here for us regarding the sacredness of all that is associated with sacred things. All that is connected with God, and with His worship, especially all that is connected with His revelation of Himself for our salvation, is to be treated with the most profound reverence. (*S. H. Kellogg, D.D.*)

CHAPTER XVIII.

VERS. 1-5. Ye shall do My judgments.—*Safety in the observance of God's laws*:—This preface of some is taken generally to concern all the laws of God; the observation whereof is ever the sure safety of a state public or private, for it is not the munition of walls, leagues, and alliance with foreign princes, largeness of confines, plenty of treasure, or such like, that preserve a commonwealth, but careful and diligent observation of public laws ordained of God for the good of man. It is said that Lacedemon flourished whilst Lycurgus's laws were observed: much more any commonwealth when God's be kept. For what comparison betwixt man's laws and God's? Demosthenes saith, It was the manner of the Loerenses, that if any man would publish and devise a new law he should put his neck into a halter ready to be put to death, if the law were not good, by which means they made men more careful to observe old and ancient, tried and known laws, than with busy heads to make new. Now what laws so old and so approved good as God's laws? Ever, therefore, are they to be regarded and hearkened unto. Others take this preface particularly of these laws concerning marriage now following, that if they be carefully kept, a kingdom long flourisheth, and if not, soon it cometh to a fearful fall. For so odious and abhorred of God is the unlawful mixture of man and woman that the Lord cannot long withhold great judgments.

And thus much remember as you read them ever, that these laws do not concern the Jews only, as the ceremonial laws now spoken of and judicial did, but these laws belong to all men and women and to all succeeding times, being eternal, immutable, grafted by God in man's nature and given by Him for holiness' sake. Note all the words well that God would not have them like either the Egyptians or Canaanites, and wish with me that there was a like law against our being like foreign nations near us, with ruffs dipped in the devil's liquor called starch, Turkish heads, Spanish backs, Italian waists, &c., giving daily occasion to the mockers that say French nets catch English fools. (*Ep. Babington.*)

Vers. 6-30. None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him.—*Consanguinity*:—1. God the institutor of marriage (ver. 6). 2. Faith in Christ not commanded in the law (ver. 5). 3. Of the several kinds of kindred by consanguinity or affinity. 4. Of the computation of the degrees of consanguinity. (1) Consanguinity is a communicating in blood, derived from one stock. (2) Affinity is a respective alliance and kindred which comes in by marriage. (3) A line is a collection of persons coming from the stock. (4) And it is threefold: the right line ascending, as the father, grandfather; or descending, as the son, &c.; or collateral—above, as the father's brother—or in the middle, as brother, sister, uncle's children—or below, as brother's son or daughter, and their sons and daughters. (5) A degree is the distance of persons from the stock. (6) In the right line ascending or descending, there are as many degrees as generations and persons. (7) In the collateral line there are as many degrees as persons. (8) In the collateral line the prohibition is extended to the fourth degree. (9) In the right line ascending and descending, the impediment is perpetual when they are alive or dead, as grounded upon the law of nature. (10) The same degrees are forbidden ascending and descending by the like analogy. (11) The same degrees are restrained by the like analogy in both sexes. (12) Where the degree further off is forbidden, the nearer are inclusively interdicted. 5. Of the computation of the degrees of affinity. (1) In what degree of consanguinity the husband is distant, in the same degree of affinity the wife is removed, because man and wife are one flesh. (2) One person added to another by carnal copulation changes the kind of affinity, not the degree: as the brother's wife is of affinity in the second degree, and first kind; if after she marry another husband, he is in the same degree of affinity, but in the second kind. (3) There are three kinds of affinity—the near, middle, and remote: as the brother's wife is in the first kind, the brother's wife's second husband in the second, the second husband's second wife in the third. (4) Affinity in the first kind is a perpetual impediment. (5) Between such as are of kindred in blood to the husband, and them that are of kin to the wife, there is no affinity to hinder marriage: as, two brothers may marry two sisters. (6) In the degrees of affinity ascending and descending in the right line, the prohibition is infinitely extended without any limitation: as, it is not lawful to marry the wife's daughter's daughter, and so downward, nor the wife's mother, or grandmother, and so upward. (7) In the collateral line, affinity is restrained to the third degree, as to uncle's wife, who is in the same degree of affinity that her husband is in consanguinity. (8) Of the agreements and differences between the degrees of consanguinity and affinity. (1) Agreement. (a) In what degree one is of consanguinity, the wife or husband is in the same degree of affinity. (b) The impediment in both continues not only during life but afterward. (c) The prohibition extends itself in both alike, in the right line ascending and descending without limitation; and in the collateral to the third degree expressly, and by a certain analogy to the fourth. (2) Differences. (a) The efficient cause of consanguinity is a natural obligation, without any relation to the will and consent of man, in the propagation and the line of consanguinity; but in affinity there is a voluntary bond or obligation by consent in marriage. (b) Consanguinity is by generation from one, both father and mother; affinity is by the copulation of two. The first is real, the second by relation. (c) In consanguinity, on both sides the bond holds, both by the father and mother, but the kinsmen of the husband are not of affinity to the kindred of the wife; on the contrary, affinity holds only in the first kind, which changes by a new copulation, though the degree alter not, as the brother's wife's second husband is not properly of affinity; but in consanguinity, the kind and degree hold out together. 6. Marriage of divers wives successively, lawful, though not together (ver. 18). 7. The Scripture most pure, even when it makes mention of impure and obscene things. (*A. Willet, D.D.*) *Moral*

observations:—1. To walk constantly in the obedience of God's law (ver. 4). 2. Against the monstrous sin of adultery (ver. 20). 3. Against the unnatural and most abominable sin of bestiality (ver. 23). 4. To profit by other men's examples, and to be warned by their punishments (ver. 25). 5. God not partial in His judgments, and therefore no man should presume (ver. 28). (*Ibid.*) *On marriage with a deceased wife's sister*:—By the wording of the Hebrew text a man is permitted to marry his deceased wife's sister, but not to have two sisters for wives at the same time, or one after the other while both are living—this is the logical inference to be drawn from the qualifying addition "in her lifetime"; and yet by the spirit of the Levitical laws, the former alliance also is like an alliance with a sister, and therefore no less objectionable. Such scruples were indeed unknown to the Hebrews of earlier times, since even in Genesis Jacob is represented as the husband of the sisters Rachel and Leah; but they followed with necessity from the severe theory of marriage gradually worked out and adopted. Philo, in the oldest explanation of our law that has come down to us, observes that it is impious for one sister to usurp the place of the other, and to make the misfortune of the latter a stepping-stone of her own happiness; thus bitter jealousies and implacable enmities must be engendered; and it would be as if the different members of the body, abandoning their natural harmony and fellowship, were to quarrel with one another, thus inevitably causing incurable diseases and endless mischief. In this sense the prohibition has commonly been understood, and if the words of our verse alone are weighed, it can hardly be understood otherwise: and yet the matrimonial laws, taken as a whole, were not prompted by considerations of mere expediency, such as the prevention of unsisterly rivalry, since their main object was to warn against alliances between near relations (ver. 6). From whatever side we weigh the question, we cannot help being struck by the incongruity of a code which permits a woman to marry, at least under certain conditions, her sister's husband, but expressly forbids a man to marry his brother's wife. If the wife dies, her husband does not cease to be the brother of that wife's sister; yet practical life seemed to demand some relief from the rigour of abstract logic, and the prohibition was limited to the lifetime of both sisters. It has been contended that this was a concession analogous to the levirat and the permission of divorce; but the cases are not quite parallel: the Levitical legislators are entirely silent with regard to the levirat and divorce; for in their own time the former was unnecessary, and the latter was strongly opposed by contemporaries, such as Malachi; a direct repeal of the two statutes, known to the people as a part of Deuteronomy, or "the Book of the Law," was unfeasible; and silence on these subjects was sufficiently significant. We need hardly add that these remarks are merely designed to elucidate the meaning and intention of the command, without attempting to decide upon its value or its binding force; the latter points must be left to individual judgment and feeling, which in no other sphere claim greater respect and freedom. The prevailing laws of matrimony may possibly, in the course of time, call for revision; and progress and liberty of action should not be checked by a misconception of Biblical authority. The very verse under consideration affords the strongest proof that the ordinances of the Levitical code are not final and unalterable; for this verse involves the sanction of polygamy, which, not even abrogated by Christ and the apostles, is now regarded by western Jews and Christians not merely as inexpedient, but as immoral. It is well known that from comparatively early times, many chiefs of the Christian Church indeed translated the words of our verse literally, yet weighing the spirit of the law, were strongly opposed to the marriage with the deceased wife's sister. By the Apostolic Canons (about 300) persons contracting such an alliance were for ever incapacitated for clerical functions. The Council of Illiberis (about 305) excluded them from holy communion for five years; St. Basil (375) imposed upon them for seven years the ecclesiastical penalties fixed for adultery; his celebrated letter on the subject proves that, in the Church "a custom equivalent to a law, and handed down by holy men" had been established against such marriages; it was in his time probably that the Septuagint (in Deut. xxvii. 23) received the interpolation found in the Vatican copy of that version, "Cursed be he who lies with his wife's sister"; and similar views were enforced by the emperors Constantius and Theodosius, Honorius, Theodosius II., and Justinian, and by all the leaders of the Greek and Latin Church: the only notable exception is Diodorus, bishop of Tarsus; but he was indignantly opposed by his contemporary St. Basil, who declared that such marriages are indeed permitted to the Jews because they are under the law and all

its ceremonial enactments, but not to the free Christians, and asked how the offspring of the two sisters would be related to each other, whether they should be called cousins or brothers, since by a deplorable "confusion" they could claim both names. In England those marriages were forbidden in 1603 by the Convocation of the province of Canterbury in a Canon which has never been formally ratified by Parliament. Dispensations were, however, readily granted in the Roman Church; and since the last century many Protestant theologians and jurists, and among the first those of the pietistic schools, as Philip Jacob Spener, declared marriage with the deceased wife's sister unobjectionable, since the prohibition is not unequivocally enjoined in the Bible. It was disapproved of by the Karaites; but among the bulk of the Jews it has at all times not only been tolerated but encouraged. (*M. M. Kalisch, Ph.D.*) *Of unlawful marriages:*—As the chosen and covenant tribes of Israel were soon to take up their journey to the land of Canaan, the inhabitants of which were to be exterminated for their multifarious iniquities in the sight of God, a recital is here made of some of those aggravated forms of wickedness which were rife among them, and which God had determined signally to punish. This is done not only to illustrate the justice of the Divine proceedings in their excision, but also with a view to put the peculiar people themselves on their guard against yielding to the contagion of their pernicious example, and thus becoming obnoxious to the same fearful retributions which were now about to be visited upon the Canaanites. The particular class of abominations more especially pointed out in this chapter, and to which the brand-mark of the Divine reprobation is so conspicuously affixed, is that of incestuous connections. Not only had that abandoned race been guilty of a total apostacy from the worship of the true God, substituting in His room the sun, and moon, and host of heaven, and bowing down to stocks and stones and creeping things, but they had mingled with their idolatry every vice that could degrade human nature and pollute society. In the black catalogue of these the abominations of lust stand pre-eminent; and whether in the form of adultery, fornication, incest, sodomy, or bestiality, they had now risen to a pitch of enormity which the forbearance of heaven could tolerate no longer, and of which a shuddering dread was to be begotten in the minds of the people of the covenant. And in order that no possible plea of ignorance or uncertainty might be left in their minds as to those connections which were lawful and those which were forbidden, the Most High proceeds in the present and in the 20th chapter to lay down a number of specific prohibitions on this subject, so framed, as not only to include the extra-nuptial pollutions, which had prevailed among the heathen, but also all those incestuous unions which were inconsistent with the purity and sanctity of the marriage relation. Both classes of crimes we think are in fact included; so that it is doing no violence to the spirit of the text to regard it as containing a system of marriage-laws by which the peculiar people were ever after to be governed. As this is the only passage in the compass of the whole Bible where any formal enactments are given on this subject, this and the connected chapters treating of this theme have always been deemed of peculiar importance in their relations to the question of the lawful degrees within which the marriage connection may now be formed by those who make the law of God the great standard of moral duty. (*G. Bush.*) *The wilderness a suitable place for the giving of these laws:*—The wilderness in which they now were was a very fit place for enjoining these laws upon the Israelites, as they were now removed from the snares and temptations of Egypt, and were not yet mingled with the people of Canaan. (*Bp. Kidder.*) *Need for marriage laws:*—The necessity for laws on this point at once discriminating, wise, and stringent, will be sufficiently obvious when we consider the strength of the passion to be controlled—constitutionally common to all ages of the world; the sacredness of the marriage relation and the inestimable value of moral purity in all human society—also common to all ages of the world's history; and (peculiar to the earlier ages) the necessity of defining the limits of consanguinity within which marriage should be prohibited. Perhaps we need to remind ourselves that the race having sprung from a single pair and the world having been repopled a second time from one family, those primitive examples may have sent down for many generations a certain looseness which called for special restraint and a carefully defining law. The crimes of Sodom, their polluting influence in so good a family as that of Lot; the low morals of Egyptian life; some sad manifestations in the early history of Jacob's family; the horrible contagion of Moab and Midian when the tribes of Israel came socially near them; these and kindred facts will be readily recalled as in point to show the

necessity of vigorous legislation in the Mosaic code to counteract these untoward influences of their antecedent life and of surrounding society. (*H. Cowles, D.D.*)

CHAPTER XIX.

VER. 2. Ye shall be holy.—*The object of God's laws*:—The position of this command at the head of the long list of precepts which follows is most significant and instructive. It sets before us the object of the whole ceremonial and moral law, and, we may add, the supreme object of the gospel also, namely, to produce a certain type of moral and spiritual character, a "holy" manhood; it, moreover, precisely interprets this term, so universally misunderstood and misapplied among all nations, as essentially consisting in a spiritual likeness to God: "Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy." These words evidently at once define holiness and declare the supreme motive to the attainment and maintenance of a holy character. This, then, is brought before us as the central thought in which all the diverse precepts and prohibitions which follow find their unity; and, accordingly, we find this keynote of the whole law echoing, as it were, all through this chapter, in the constant refrain, repeated herein no less than fourteen—twice seven—times; "I am the Lord!" "I am the Lord your God!" (*S. H. Kellogg, D.D.*) *A fountain of purity*:—One summer day, a few years ago, strolling for rest and pleasure near the mouth of the Columbia river, where there is a large rise and fall of the tide, I came, at low tide, upon a splendid spring of pure, fresh water, clear as crystal, gushing up from between the rocks that two hours before had formed a part of the river's bed. Twice a day the soiled tide rises above that beautiful fountain and covers it over; but there it is, down deep under the salt tide, and when the tide has spent its force and gone back again to the ocean's depths, it sends out its pure waters fresh and clear as before. So if the human heart be really a fountain of love to Christ it will send out its streams of fresh, sweet waters, even into the midst of the salt tides of politics or business. And the man who carries such a fountain into the day's worry and struggle will come again at night, when the world's tide has spent its force, with clean hands, sweet spirit, and conscience void of offence toward God and man. (*S. S. Chronicle.*) *Holiness silences the profane*:—Holiness has a mighty influence upon others. It stops the mouths of the ungodly, who are ready to reproach religion and throw the dirt of professors' sins on the face of profession itself. They say frogs will cease croaking when a light is brought near them; the light of a holy conversation hangs, as it were, a padlock on profane lips. (*W. Gurnall.*)

Ver. 3. Ye shall fear . . . mother . . . father.—*Maternal rule*:—This is a remarkable command, given by God to Moses. Not for the matter of it, for it is the same in substance with the fifth in the Decalogue. But as differing from that and other parallel passages, it is remarkable on two accounts. In those the father is always put first. It is, "Honour thy father and thy mother." "He that smiteth his father and his mother, shall surely be put to death." "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother." "Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old." "Honour thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise." But here, mother is put first—"Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father." Then again, the word "fear"—"Thou shalt fear thy mother and thy father," occurs in no other passage. There must be a meaning, both in the word "fear," and the singular collocation of the sentence. And what is it? Fathers are in general wont to govern their children more by authority, and mothers by love. Hence they are more afraid of offending their fathers than their mothers. This is especially the case with boys, about the time when they enter their teens. For three or four years they are more impatient of restraint than ever before or after. They are then apt to think they know much more than their mothers, and are quite capable of governing themselves. To guard against this undervaluing of their mother's authority seems to have been the special design of the command in question. "Ye shall fear every man his mother"—detracting nothing from the father's authority; but putting the mother's in the foreground, because there is danger of its being

despised or overlooked. The word "fear," in this case, is not quite synonymous with "honour," in the fifth commandment. It has rather more intensity of meaning, if it is not more imperative. There is more of awe in fear, if not more of reverence. God intended to put both parents on the same level. Both are to be feared alike. And this purity of governmental control carries along with it corresponding obligations. Mothers must not shrink from exercising the authority with which God has clothed them, to "train up their children in the way in which they should go," however crossing it may sometimes be to their parental yearning. Let them rule by love as much as they can. The more the better. But restraint, by coercion, where nothing else will do, is one of the highest forms in which parental love is manifested. It would be wrong, it would be cruel to withhold it from the wayward child. Thousands upon thousands have been greatly wronged, if not ruined, by overweening motherly indulgence. The surest way ultimately to win that undying filial love, "which casteth out fear," is to restrain and govern the boy just at the age when he is most restive under parental control. Woe to the child that breaks away from the authority which God has ordained. Evil is as surely before him as the going down of the sun (Prov. xxx. 17). (*Dr. Humphrey.*) *Ungrateful children rebuked by birds*:—The birds can teach ungrateful children their duty towards aged parents. It is an old tradition with regard to storks, says Mr. Morris in his "British Birds," that they take care of and nourish their parents when they are too old to take care of themselves, from whence the Greek word "pelargicos," signifying the duty of children to take care of their parents; and "pelargicoi nomoi," signifying the laws relating to that duty, both derived from the Greek word for a stork; "Pelargos," from *pelas*, black; and "argos," white, alluding to the prevailing colours of the stork. (*Scientific Illustrations.*) *A son's devotion to his mother*:—I remember just now a young man whom the Lord has blessed on account of the love he has shown his mother. Many years ago when her husband died, she was walking the streets of Glasgow in sore distress, her heart being, as it were, in the grave with her husband. She was utterly heedless of the great crowd, and almost forgetful of the kindly little boy, then only three and a half years old, who was walking by her side. He reminded her that he was there by pulling her hand earnestly, and when she looked down to him, he said, "Mother, don't cry!"—for he saw the tears were stealing down her cheeks—"I will be the father," and the whole soul of the child was in his face. As he spoke those words the warmth of summer and the life of the spring-time of joy came again into the mother's heart. God spared him to fulfil his promise, and to receive the blessing that is annexed to the fifth commandment, and I am glad he is living to-day a prosperous and honourable merchant. It is some years since I joined him in laying his mother's honoured head in the grave. Shortly before she died she was able, beautifully and lovingly, to testify that her son had amply redeemed the promise of his childhood, that what his father would have been, had he been spared, her son had successfully tried to be her. (*J. G. Cunningham.*) *Respect for a mother*:—Men who have risen from humble life to wealth and high social rank have often been ashamed of their parents, and shown them little attention or respect. Such treatment indicates a vulgar mind. True nobility follows a different method. Richard Hurd, an eminent bishop of the Church of England at the close of the last century, was a man of courtly manners, of great learning, who moved with distinction in the best society in the kingdom. George III. pronounced him "the most naturally polite man he had ever known." He, however, never failed to show the utmost respect for his mother, a farmer's wife, of no education, but of sterling character. When he entertained large companies at the Episcopal Palace, he led her with a stately courtesy to the head of the table, and paid her the greatest deference. The high-born families who sat at his table revered his conduct, so becoming to a son and a gentleman. (*New Orleans Democrat.*) *Sacred to the memory of a mother*:—"I want," said the late Emperor of Germany, the last but one, the great William, "I want a lamp such as Such-and-so has," naming some distinguished member of the Court. The lamp was provided according to the very pattern, but his Majesty complained, on returning to his study after withdrawal, that he could not bear the savour of the room; the lamp was emitting smoke, and it was altogether intolerable. One of the secondary servants knew the reason, but dare not name it to his Majesty. One of the higher servants learned the cause and brought it under his Majesty's attention. "It is because your Majesty turns down the light when you leave the study that occasions the emission of smoke and vapours, and if you will cease to do that all will be well." "Ah," said the sweet old patriarch of his

nation, "I know how that is. I learned that in the days of our poverty. After the battle of Jena we were very poor, and my mother never allowed us to leave the room at night without turning down the light, and I continue to turn down the light in memory of my mother." A beautiful example, a tender domestic story that. Here is a man who could have had a thousand lamps, yet in memory of the days of his poverty, when his mother taught him the uses of money, he kept turning down the light, saying, "Sacred to the memory of my mother." (*J. Parker, D.D.*) **And keep My Sabbaths.**—*The Sabbath kept*:—During the latter part of his life General Jackson was in the habit of coming down to New Orleans to see his old friends and comrades in arms and participate in the celebration of the glorious 8th of January. It happened on one of these visits that the 8th occurred on Sunday. General Plache called upon the old hero and requested him to accompany the military to the battle-ground on the anniversary of the great day. "I am going to church to-morrow," mildly observed the General. The military preparations for the celebration went on, and on Sunday morning at ten o'clock General Plache called at the St. Charles and informed General Jackson that the military and civic processions were ready to accompany him to the scene of his glory. "General Plache," responded old Hickory, turning upon him the glance of his kindling eye, "I told you I was going to church to-day." General Plache withdrew, muttering to himself, "I might have known better." The celebration was postponed till the next day.

Ver. 4. Turn ye not unto idols.—*Folly of idolatry*:—A Chinese wife was one day seen by a missionary to enter a temple. In her hands were some humble offerings, such as a twig, or rice, for propitiating the poor, blind deity. There he stood, some forty feet high, blackened and begrimed with the smoke of incense for hundreds of years. She presented her petition; she called upon the idol to protect and return in safety her husband, then on the sea in a storm. A few weeks after the missionary was there, and saw the same female enter the temple in a rage. She stood before the grim idol and cursed it for being so blind, so deaf, so helpless, as to let her husband perish! Yes, the wailing widow of heathen life only echoed the sad complaints of millions in Christian lands. They found their hopes and build their plans on just such baseless, blind, deaf gods as this humble dweller in darkness. The worldling ever prays to a god that is deaf and blind! (*Van Doren, D.D.*)

Vers. 9, 10. Thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field.—*A sermon to gleaners*:—The subject of gleaning in the fields may appear to some to be a very lowly one, and an address delivered exclusively to those who have been engaged in it, unnecessary: but a little reflection will suffice to remove such objections, if they ever existed in the mind of any person. Gleaning is not a humbler employment than that of a fisherman, and if the Lord turned the latter so as to convey instruction to His followers, there is no reason why the former should be beneath the notice of His ministers, in their efforts to reach the consciences of men. The custom of gleaning in the fields is very ancient. It is probable that it prevailed in the land of Canaan long before it was taken possession of by the children of Israel, and it is not unlikely that they found it there and adopted the practice. The nations who dwelt in this land were so wicked and abandoned that they were marked for destruction by the sword of Israel and of God. Their fields were fertile far beyond any fertility which now exists, as it was not an uncommon thing for grain to be reaped a hundred times beyond what was sown. The vines were so fruitful and the clusters were so large that the two men who went out as spies from the camp of the Israelites at Kadesh-Barnea, returned from the valley of Eschol carrying one bunch of grapes on a staff upon their shoulders as a specimen of what they saw growing in the vineyards. The gleaning of such fields and of such vineyards must have afforded no insignificant reward. When the Jews obtained possession of the land, after they had driven out the nations which were before them, God recognised gleaning in the Mosaic Law, and laid down rules for its regulation. The text which I have chosen from the nineteenth chapter of Leviticus contains part of this law; the rest will be found in Deut. xxiv. God sanctioned the practice, and commanded that some grain and olives and grapes should be left to be gleaned by the poor, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and thus He required the Jews to pay to those who are more immediately depending for support on His bounty, a sort of tribute in acknowledgment of the tenure under which they held their land. The Jews paid no rent, because God Himself was the owner,

having given it to them without price or reward; and when He commanded them to leave something for the poor gleaners in harvest, He did so that He might be able to bless His people in all the work of their hands. The reason why the Almighty sanctioned the practice of gleaning is very similar to this notion. He commanded His people to allow their fields to be gleaned, that they might always be kept in remembrance that they had been bondmen in Egypt. The recollection of this slavery was also preserved among them by the Sabbath, and by the command to do strict justice between man and man, as if the Almighty intended that the people, after they had attained to national power and prosperity, should be continually reminded of "the rock from whence they were hewn, and of the hole of the pit from whence they were digged." The sight of poor persons gleaning in the fields always reminded the Jews that they had been in slavery in Egypt, and that like them they had been depending upon others for a hard and uncertain living. In fact, both the gleaners and the owners of the fields had been bondmen, and both were alike the receivers of God's bounty, although in different ways and in different degrees. More than three thousand years have rolled past since this law was enacted, but the principle which it contains is just as applicable to gleaners now as it was then. The poor Jew, gleaning in the fields of his rich brethren, had been a slave, but after he got into the Promised Land he became free; and exactly so, every gleaner who now searches in the fields of the farmers for heads of grain is free. I mean to tell you that you are politically free, and that you do not owe obedience to any master, except you bind yourselves to serve him for some payment. You were never slaves, as the Jews had been in Egypt, when they were forced to serve in a cruel bondage. But, let me ask you, are you really free? When you were gleaning in the fields this harvest, could you say with truth that you had once been slaves, but that you were now free? A person gleaning in the fields in harvest may be free, but she is a slave, bound hand and foot, if sin have the dominion over her. A woman gathering heads of grain in the fields may be free, but she is a slave if she spend her hard-won earnings in the public-house, drinking out of the cup which cheers, but swallowing along with the drink liquid fire and death. That gleaner is free who goes out and comes in without any to forbid, but she is a slave to the custom of gleaning, which is otherwise lawful, if, for the sake of the trifle which she may obtain in this way, she neglects her children, her husband, and her home. Every gleaner is as free as the air of heaven, but they are all slaves to their own passions if they are unable to agree together in the same field, and begin to use abusive language, to quarrel about rights which have no existence, except in the goodwill of the farmer, exhibiting scenes which could only find a parallel in the fields of the degraded Canaanites before they were driven out by the Jews. There is not a gleaner in the land who is not absolutely free, but every one of them is bound in fetters far stronger than fetters of iron or of brass, if, with this privilege of gleaning in another man's fields at their command, they have thankless hearts, and entertain no gratitude to God for His mercy, nor to the farmers for their benevolence. This brings me in natural consequence to speak about the persons on whose behalf God made the law about gleaning. They are the poor, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. I do not know whether those who go out to glean in the fields in these days could be arranged into these four classes; but they at least furnish a guide as to the persons to whom the Almighty especially extends His care. He told His people that the poor should never cease out of the land, therefore He commanded them, saying, "Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor and to thy needy in thy land." The poor are the objects of God's special protection, as long as they lead lives of holiness and humility, contented with their lot, and confident in the mercy of Heaven. If they are prodigate and ungodly, dishonest and discontented, idle and careless, not one of the promises in Scripture will apply to them any more than they do to any of God's open and avowed enemies. 2. The next class of persons who were permitted to glean in the fields were strangers, from whatever country they might have come, as was Ruth, who was a daughter of Moab. God also made provision for them, knowing how unhappy is the lot of that man who is an exile from his native land. He commanded His people not on any account to do them an injury: "Thou shalt neither vex a stranger nor oppress him, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." God by His providence watches over strangers, and never fails to reward those who help them, whether by allowing them to glean in the fields in harvest-time, or in any other manner. 3. The next class who were allowed to glean were the fatherless, whose parent was dead. If the Jew drove off from his fields in harvest a poor

fatherless child, who wanted to glean some heads of corn, I have no doubt that he was guilty of a sin and a crime. There is no obligation upon any Christian man to allow such a one to search over his fields at this season of the year, but when he does permit the fatherless to glean up what the reapers have left behind, I make no doubt that he does that which is pleasing in the sight of God, and he will be able to understand, from the description of the judgment in the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew, that the reward will far outbalance the kindness. 4. The only other class whom God allowed to be gleaners were widows. Like the poor, the stranger, and the fatherless, God always remembers them. Let them always remember, that, whether they may be in a cornfield among other gleaners, like Ruth in the field of Boaz, or, like the woman of Sidon, alone in a cottage with scarce enough food to eat, or, like the widow of Nain, following in tears an only son to the grave, God watches over them, and commands His angels to give them an invisible but effectual protection. There is little more to be said on this subject of gleaning, beyond one other consideration, which we shall do well to lay seriously to heart. We reflected upon the great harvest of men, which is to be gathered in by the angelic reapers at the end of this dispensation. That will be a harvest after which there will be no gleaning. (*O. B. Courtenay, M.A.*) *Harvest gleanings*:—How notable are the provisions made in the Mosaic Law for the poor. 1. The Sabbatical year (Exod. xxiii. 10, 11; cf. Deut. xv. 12, 15). 2. The equalisation of the atonement money for poor and rich, thus establishing the value of the poor as equal to the rich (Exod. xxx. 12). 3. The same minute directions for the poor man's offerings, showing God's equal interest in his sacrifice (chap. ii. &c.) 4. And here the command that the harvest and vintage gleanings should be left (vers. 9, 10). Notice—I. THAT THE HUMANE LAWS OF MODERN TIMES, respecting gleaning privileges, are all based upon this Mosaic command. Everywhere there is a popular feeling that the farmer should allow, and was not entitled to prevent the poor from gathering what the reaper left behind. In England the custom of gleaning had very nearly passed into a legal right, for there is an extra judicial dictum of Lord Hall, in which he says that those who enter a field for this purpose are not guilty of trespass; and Blackstone (iii. 12) seems to adopt his opinion. But that has since been twice tried, and decided in the negative in the Court of Common Pleas; the Court finding it to be a practice incompatible with the exclusive enjoyment of property, and productive of vagrancy and many mischievous consequences. "It is still, however, the custom all over England to allow the poor to glean, at least after the harvest is carried" (Chambers). II. THAT A BENEVOLENT HELPFULNESS IN RESPECT OF THE POOR IS A SPECIAL OBLIGATION OF THOSE WHO ENJOY PLENTY. 1. With God in thought the rich will spare of their abundance that the poor may be fed. You owe all to Him, especially in harvest; and, therefore, share with the needy His gifts to you. 2. Amid harvest rejoicings, gratitude should incite to generosity. "As ye have received, give!" Seek occasion to gladden others—those in need. God is lavish; let your "hands be open" also (Psa. cxlv. 16). 3. Kindness to the poor has especial assurances of Divine approval (Psa. ix. 18; xii. 5). III. THAT THIS GENEROUS CONSIDERATION FOR THE POOR IS A TOKEN OF GOD'S REGARD FOR THE LOWLY. 1. Their maintenance engaged the Divine attention. For them "the corner" of the field was claimed from the reapers, and to them was assigned the right to clear the ground. It was their part in the national soil, the poor had this heritage in the land. And God enjoins on His Church now to "care for the poor." They are Christ's bequeathment to His disciples. "The poor always ye have with you." 2. Their salvation is prominently sought in the gospel. "To the poor the gospel is preached." And "God hath chosen the poor rich in faith." He who showed concern for their physical supply and maintenance, as emphatically manifests His desire that they be "blessed with all spiritual blessings" in Christ. Therefore—(1) The poor should cherish a grateful and trustful hope in their God. (2) They should value the high mercies of redemption in Christ beyond all the kindnesses of His providence. For the favours of providence only affect them temporally, but "the riches of His grace" are of eternal consequence. (3) Let none, because of lowliness or poverty, despond of God's favour. All His regulations prove that "He careth for you." Look unto Him with assurance. (*W. H. Jellie.*) *A margin for the benefit of the poor*:—I think one of the most beautiful traits in the provision and economy of God in the Old Testament Scriptures is the constant reference to the poor. The permanency of the rich and the poor is what Christ Himself has declared; there will be rich and poor as long as this dispensation lasts, and any attempt to break down the distinction entails calamity on the nation that makes it. The distinction does exist, and will exist as

long as men live and intellectual energies differ in degree—for the fact is, men are not all equal, they may talk as they will that all men are equal. In one sense, before God, all men are equal; but in another respect they are not. One man has more physical energy or more mental energy than another. One man has more skill than another, one man more activity than another; and several things are constantly keeping up that broad and palpable distinction between them that have and them that have not. But just as the Israelite reaper left some ears of corn for the poor and for the stranger, so you, in estimating your labours, which are to you for all practical purposes your cornfields, in arranging your profits, your gains, your losses, ought to have a balance or a margin for the benefit of the poor, the destitute, and the needy. God especially blessed a nation that took care of the poor; and God still provides for and pronounces blessed those that consider the poor. I know that what are called “poor’s rates” are extremely objectionable, because, when you pay your poor’s rates you give a tax, and when the poor get in the workhouse, the bread that it buys they take as a right, and the consequence is, all benevolence on your part is quenched, and all gratitude on the part of the poor is ruined also. But then, such is the hardness of the human heart in so many cases, that a wise and merciful Government is bound to make the law, and to compel that as a right which many would much rather give as the act of benevolence and kindness. But because you do pay poor’s rates you still must leave a margin to give something; for those rates are not yet intolerable, and on all occasions we should be delighted that we have an opportunity of making the heart of the widow rejoice and the orphan sing for joy. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*)

Ver. 11. Ye shall not steal.—Stealing discouraged:—The illustrious Joseph Priestley tells us in his Memoir that he was influenced in his very earliest life by an act of his mother, who died when he was seven years old. He had returned from visiting his cousins, and had brought home a pin. “Where did you get that pin from, Joseph?” said his mother. “I brought it from my cousins.” “Then,” she said, “it is not yours—take it back”; and he was gently and lovingly, yet firmly, made to take it back. So great was the impression made on his mind that afterwards not the smallest detail of wrong could he ever think of without being influenced by the recollection of that simple admonition. Such is the influence upon the young life of all that it sees. It is the *tabula rasa* on which you write your words and thoughts in the deeds that are yet to come. (*Dr. Richardson.*) Neither lie one to another.—**Discredit gained by falsehood:**—When Aristotle was asked what a man could gain by telling a falsehood, he replied, “Never to be credited when he tells the truth.” **Truth-telling:**—I remember some years ago, when living in a country town in Kent, the superintendent of our Sunday School saying: “We are to have an address this afternoon. Mr. Waters has asked to say a few words to us.” True to his promise he soon came into the chapel, and all eyes were on him. “My dear teachers, you often think you labour in vain, but it is not so; I want to encourage you this afternoon. This last week I have met with two circumstances which have pleased me much. One day I was in my shop, when a stone came through the window. I went to the door; there were a good many boys in the road; I called out, ‘Who broke my window?’ No answer. I then asked several of them, but all said, ‘No, not me.’ Just then a little lad stepped up and said, ‘I am very sorry, sir, but I did it.’ ‘But how is it, my lad, that you own to it? Come in and tell me.’ ‘Sir, I go to the Sunday School, and I can’t tell a lie.’ Well done, John Rolfe, I have come here this afternoon to give you a shilling—not for breaking my window, no, no, but for speaking the truth, and practising what you hear.” (*Mrs. Spurgeon.*) **Truth a handle to lying:**—A lie always needs a truth for a handle to it, else the hand would cut itself which sought to drive it home upon another. The worst lies, therefore, are those whose blade is false, but whose handle is true. (*H. W. Beecher.*) **Prolific lying:**—One sin entertained fetcheth in another; a lie especially, which being a tinkery, bluishful sin, is either denied by the liar, who is ashamed to be taken with it, or else covered by another and another lie, as we see in Jacob, who, being once over shoes will be over boots too but he will persuade his father that he is his very son Esau. (*J. Trapp.*)

Ver. 12. Ye shall not swear by My name falsely. False swearing:—All nations have severely punished perjury. The Egyptians with death or mutilation; the Greeks with heavy fines and ultimate loss of all civil rights; the Romans visited it with the penalty of death. These ancient nations all held that the gods were

especially incensed by this crime, and that a Divine Nemesis pursued the perjurer.

I. WHAT SWEARING BY GOD'S NAME ENTAILS. 1. Acknowledgment of His Omnipotence. It calls Him to witness, and imprecates Him as the avenger of falsehood. 2. Acknowledgment of His righteousness. He is to be the umpire and arbitrator. We call in as a witness to our fidelity only such a one as is himself faithful and true, and will act a right part. Such is God. Man's use of His name is an appeal to the certainty that He will judge aright.

II. WHAT PERJURY IN GOD'S NAME ENTAILS. 1. An insolent affront upon God's character. It is infamous, daring insolence, the degradation of His most holy name for unholy ends. It invokes Him to act as a witness that a lie is true. Yet He loathes falsity. It is defiant trifling, an affront to the God of truth. It "profanes His name." 2. A certain visitation of judgment. He "will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain" (Exod. xx. 7). Certainly, therefore, He will punish lying and profanity. Having been called in as a witness to a lie, He will prove that He witnessed it. Thus to insult His love of truth and defy His power to vindicate it, and trail the purity of His character in the mire—before whom the very angels veil their faces as they adore Him—will ensure a just requital (Heb. x. 30). And "there shall in no wise enter the heavenly city any who loveth and maketh a lie" (Rev. xxi. 27).

(W. H. Jellie.) *Perjury*.—**I. WHAT PERJURY IS, AND HOW MANY WAYS IT IS COMMITTED.** 1. Perjury is a swearing by God's name falsely, a calling God to witness for the confirmation of a lie. 2. It is committed several ways. (1) When men do assert and testify upon oath a thing to be true which they know to be false. (2) When men do assert and testify upon oath a thing to be true of the truth of which they are not fully assured. (3) They that promise upon oath, what they intended not to perform, or are unresolved and indifferent whether they shall perform it or not. These are, *ipso facto*, guilty of perjury, because they swear by God's name falsely; they call God to witness and to vouch for the truth and sincerity of their promise, when the intention of their minds does not concur with the words of their mouths. (4) They also are guilty of perjury that having promised upon oath sincerely and with an honest intention do yet afterwards fall off and renounce the obligation, do not faithfully and resolutely endeavour and take care to fulfil their word, do act contrary to their oath when a just occasion requires and calls for the performance of their promise or sworn duty. (5) They are involved in the guilt of perjury who against, or without the consent of the Supreme Power, do frame and impose upon others, or take themselves new oaths contrary to, and destructive of, their former obligations. (6) They are guilty of perjury who make use of tricks and cheats and subtle artifices to evade and elude the obligation of their oaths, who will not understand the words of an oath in their assertions or promises, according to the plain and common acceptance of them, but by fastening a secret sense of their own upon some ambiguous terms, or by some reserves, or exceptions, or additions within their minds, do not quite alter the meaning of the words, and thereby intend neither to be obliged to speak truth nor perform their promises.

II. THE HEINOUSNESS OF THIS SIN OF PERJURY. 1. It is an affront to God, and to all those glorious attributes that shine forth and display themselves in the government of the world. 2. It is also most injurious and mischievous to man. (1) In his private capacity. Life, liberty, reputation, estate are all at the mercy of the perjurer. (2) To conversation and commerce. All our dealings, and trades, and contracts, and friendships are grounded upon and managed by the faith and assurance that we give and take of the sincerity of our minds and purposes, expressed by our words, and in great concerns confirmed by our oaths. (3) As to government and the consequents of it—peace and order, and just liberty—there is nothing but perjury can destroy it and deprive us of them. Nothing but perjury can carry on faction and begin a rebellion. Nothing but the highest profanation of God's name can ruin the monarchy. (4) Perjury is injurious to public justice.

III. THE OCCASIONS OF, OR TEMPTATIONS TO, THIS SIN. 1. Atheism. A denying of God and Providence. This indeed were a rational account of, and excuse for, perjury, if atheism itself were rational. An atheist, should he swear falsely every hour, upon every occasion, would do like an atheist, and act consistently to his principles. For what should hinder him from complying with our forms and customs of calling of God to witness when it is for his advantage? He knows of no God to come at his call to look on and be a witness of his words, and the searcher of his heart. He believes no judgment to come, no future state. 2. Lying, and treachery, and customary swearing. These things do qualify and dispose a man to forswear himself upon any convenience or temptation. Because

hereby men throw off that reverence and respect to religion, that fear of God's power and justice, which would restrain them. 3. To these I might add the usual occasions and common temptations to this sin. Such are poverty and necessity; covetousness, and hope of reward; also fear, whether of shame or of punishment, or of both. In some, ambition and popularity, a desire and thirst after honour and greatness. In others, or perhaps in the same, revenge and malice; or else favour, affection and partiality. Or, lastly, faction, sedition, and designs against the government. As to all of which it may be enough to remark, that when these furious passions and violent desires are able to overmaster and run down the fear of God, and the reverence of an oath in the hearts of men, then is perjury the most easy and compendious, the most secure, the most proper way to relieve their wants, or satisfy their covetous desires, or to rid them of their fears, or to gratify their ambition, or to please their friends, or despatch their enemies, or to compass and complete their seditious designs. IV. THE PUNISHMENTS OF PERJURY, and these are severe and dreadful in proportion to the guilt of this great sin. It is a good rule. Men ought to weigh well the damages and mischievous consequences of their false-witnessing and perfidiousness, not to others only, but to themselves; that if conscience and the sense of their duty cannot prevail with them, they may be restrained by the fear of suffering. (*John Allen, M.A.*) *Of the nature and manner of an oath, and when to be taken:—*1. An oath is a constant and serious asseveration of the truth of a thing, whereunto the Divine Majesty is called to witness. 2. The use of an oath is common to God, who sweareth by Himself, having not a greater to swear by, to angels and to men. 3. Things affirmed by oath are either uncertain in themselves—as to swear touching things to come; or are certain, but seem uncertain to us, and therefore an oath is required; or they are not only certain but necessary, as are all God's promises, which depend upon His immutable word, yet in regard of our weakness are confirmed by the Lord's oath. 4. As God is the author and institutor of an oath, so His name only is to be used therein, because He alone knows the heart, is everywhere present to hear, and of omnipotent power, able to take revenge both of soul and body. 5. Three things are to be considered in a lawful oath—the necessity, the truth, and the manner. (*A Willet, D.D.*) *The nature and obligation of an oath; the guilt and danger of perjury:—*The necessity of oaths is almost universally admitted among men. It arises out of the unavoidable condition of human affairs, and is so essential to the peace and order of society that they could scarcely subsist without it. It is not only in places of trust, and in cases of evidence, that it is necessary to have recourse to this sacred obligation. It is frequently requisite, for the final decision of disputes, to refer to the oath of one of the parties. Not that an oath is always a true and infallible decision; but it is the highest credit which a human being can give to his own declaration; it is the utmost security which a man can give to the public in doubtful cases; it is the last effort of truth and confidence among mankind. After this we can go no farther; for if the religion of an oath will not oblige a man to speak the truth, there is nothing which will oblige him. It must rest till that awful day of retribution come, when God will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and judge the secrets of men's hearts by Christ Jesus. One would be almost tempted to conclude that no man who believes in a future state could be guilty of false swearing. But there is no arguing against fact, and fact is decidedly against this conclusion. The generality of men who swear falsely, do it either to procure some worldly advantage, or to save themselves from some necessary expense; and there have been some so abandoned as to take the wages of iniquity, and to sell themselves to prostitute the name of God. What is the reason that these temptations prevail, and drive men to this wickedness and sin against God? It is either because they are ignorant or inconsiderate. If men distinctly understood the force of this sacred obligation, and considered the guilt and danger of violating it, there is scarcely any earthly consideration which could tempt them to perjury. I. There are two lights in which an oath principally regards God, THAT OF AN OMNISCIENT WITNESS, AND THAT OF A RIGHTEOUS JUDGE. So help me God, is one of the ordinary expressions in it. So protect me from evil, or abandon me to misery, as I now use Thy name to support truth or to cover falsehood. So help in the hour of solemn devotion, when Thou hearest the prayer of the upright man, and rejectest him who has sworn deceitfully. So help me amidst the dangers and evils of life, through which I have to pass, and from which no man can deliver me. So help me in the awful hour of dissolution, when I must walk through the valley of the shadow of death, when all human help is

vain, and our only hope is in God. To swear falsely is to renounce that hope, and to forfeit all title to the Divine protection. II. Such is the nature of an oath; and from this account it will be easy to ascertain THE GUILT OF FALSE SWEARING, which was the second thing we proposed to consider. In whatever light you view perjury, whether in respect of God or man, you will find it to be a sin of the most enormous nature. Consider the impiety of it towards God, and it will appear to be the grossest indignity which man can offer to his Maker. 1. It is not a sin of ignorance or infirmity, into which he may fall through the weakness of human nature. It is a presumptuous transgression against God. The guilt of perjury is deliberate, which is one of the greatest aggravations of sin. Other sins generally proceed from a forgetfulness of God, a want of due sense of His presence; but to swear falsely by the name of God is at once to remember God and to disobey Him. Other sins are nothing more than acts of disobedience to God; but perjury is much more than disobedience, it is a direct insult offered to the Supreme Being. To call solemnly on God to witness a falsehood, in order to cover our own guilt, and to impose on the ignorance of mankind—what does it imply? It is to invoke the Supreme Being to be present at an unrighteous action; it is to summon in the Almighty to be a spectator of wickedness. Awful as this is, it is not the worst. To call on God to countenance falsehood, and to sanction a lie by His sacred name, contains a still grosser impiety, which I shudder to mention. It is an attempt to draw God Himself into sin, to make the great Creator a party in vice, to make the Holy One and the Just an accomplice in villainy. 2. The guilt of perjury farther appears from its effect on society. It is not only an act of the grossest indignity to God, but of the greatest injury to mankind. There are some individuals who suffer by every act of false swearing. Consider what loss of property, what hurt of character, or what vexation and distress of mind it frequently brings on an innocent man. Ask the person who has suffered by perjury, and he will describe, from his feelings, what a heinous crime it is. Put yourself in his place, enter into his feelings, listen to the language of your own heart, and you will see clearly the guilt of false swearing. But the mischievous effects of perjury are not confined to the persons who more immediately suffer by it. It is of much more extensive influence; it militates against mankind in general; it is an act of treason against human society. It is an attempt to subvert the foundation of public order, and of private security. It is an attempt to defeat the last method which the wisdom of man has devised in order to maintain the peace and order of society, and to decide doubtful matters. The man who can be guilty of this sin, must be void of all reverence for his Maker, and of all regard for the interests of his fellow creatures. He is not only a reprobate in the sight of God, but also a traitor against mankind. III. Need I now proceed to the last head of discourse, to point out THE DANGER OF FALSE SWEARING? A vice of so uncommon a magnitude, every man's conscience must tell him, deserves to be punished both by God and man. Among all nations with which we are acquainted, false swearing has been punished as a crime which strikes at the root of society; and in many places of the world the perjurer, as well as the murderer, has been thought worthy of death. But though the perjurer should escape the scourge of the law, there is another punishment from men which generally awaits him. He forfeits his character, the most precious thing in the world, and is consigned to infamy. But what are all the punishments from men in comparison of the judgments of God, which await the perjurer? This is a degree of guilt which God will certainly punish with more than ordinary vengeance. I will come near to you in judgment, says God Himself by the prophet, and be a swift witness against the swearer. The curse, says another inspired writer, goeth over the face of the whole earth; and God shall bring it forth, and it shall enter into the house of him that sweareth falsely by the name of God, and shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof. It shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it. But the external judgments of God are not the only punishment to which the perjurer becomes liable. He destroys the foundation of the peace of his own mind, and exposes himself to the greatest of all terrors, to the dread of the great Creator. But what are all the sufferings of this life in comparison to that of everlasting misery which awaits the false swearer in the life to come? With what tremblings of heart, with what confusion of face, will he appear before the Judge of all the earth, whose authority he contemned, and whose name he prostituted? The whole scene of his iniquity will then be disclosed, in the presence of an assembled world, in the presence of Christ and the holy angels.

He must then lie down in shame and everlasting contempt. (*Andrew Donnan.*) Neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God.—*Against profaning the name of God*.—I. THE SIGNIFICATION OF THE TERMS. II. THE NATURE OF THE SEVERAL VICES INCLUDED IN THIS PROHIBITION. 1. The highest and most presumptuous degree is perjury; when a man solemnly calls God to witness to the truth of that which he either knows to be false or does not know to be true. 2. The next degree is that indecent, as well as wicked, custom of rash swearing in common conversation. (1) Of which sin the first aggravation is, that they who are guilty of it are in perpetual danger of the crime of perjury. For he who uses himself to swear habitually will never attend carefully that what he swears to be true. (2) But if the danger of perjury could certainly be avoided (as it never can be by habitual swearers), yet to call upon God perpetually as a witness to trivial matters, is manifest want of reverence and want of a just sense of God and religion. And this fault is the more inexcusable because there cannot here be pretended, as in most other vices, any natural temptation. 3. Scoffing, blaspheming, or speaking reproachfully of religion. This is what the Psalmist reckons in the highest degree of sins, where he distinguishes offenders into three several ranks (Psa. i. 1). 4. Careless and inconsiderate vows. When the matter of them is unjust, as in the case of the Corban among the Jews, who hypocritically dedicated that to the service of God and for the use of the Temple, which they ought to have employed in relieving the necessities of their destitute parents (Mark vii. 2). Or when the matter of a vow is impossible or unreasonable, or the thing vowed be unprofitable and of no tendency to promote true religion, or the manner of making the vow be rash and irreligious. 5. Too frequent familiar and irreverent mention of God in ordinary conversation, without an habitual sense and just awe of Him upon our minds; men are very apt to run into some degree of the fault forbidden here. III. THE ARGUMENT BROUGHT TO ENFORCE THE PROHIBITION. "I am the Lord." The Lord, that is, He whose sovereignty and supreme dominion or authority over us gives Him a right to demand, and whose continual mercy and goodness towards us gives Him reason to expect that we should, in an equal sense both of duty and gratitude, pay all possible obedience to Him. The Lord, who made and governs all things, whose power is irresistible, and His kingdom infinite and eternal, who will not be mocked, nor hold them guiltless that take His name in vain. Will not hold them guiltless; that is, will certainly and severely punish them. (*S. Clarke, D.D.*) *On profaning the name of God*.—I. AN OATH IS AN APPEAL TO THE SUPREME BEING, as Judge of the truth of what we assert, whose omniscience knows the secrets of our hearts, knows whether what we declare be correspondent or not to the conviction of our minds, and whose justice will accordingly either favour or be avenged of us; it is the submitting to God, the invisible Judge, and imploring His protection, or imprecating His vengeance, according to the truth or falsehood of what we affirm. II. Let us next observe WHAT IT IS TO PROFANE THE NAME OF GOD. 1. This is done when we use it without due consideration and reverence, or when we use it in an unlawful action. We are directed to sanctify the Lord our God, *i.e.*, to form such holy conceptions of His great and adorable nature as may lead us to a suitable return of reverential homage. And yet how common is it, on the most slight and unimportant occasions, to hear men utter inconsiderately the name of God when neither the subject of their thoughts is so weighty, nor the temper of their minds so serious, as to justify the use of it. 2. But further, the name of God is in a peculiar manner profaned when we invoke His presence to an unlawful action, and summon Him, as it were, to be a spectator of our guilt. This is a sin of more than common magnitude; it is an open defiance to the power and justice of the Almighty, and an insult on almost all the perfections of the Divine nature. III. I PROCEED TO OFFER SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON THE GUILT OF HABITUALLY PROFANING THE NAME OF GOD IN CONVERSATION. No one instructed in the first rudiments of religion can be ignorant of the flagitious nature of this sin (Exod. xx. 7). In the New Testament our Saviour says, "Swear not at all." And by the vehemence expressed by St. James we may reasonably judge that he considered this sin of habitually profaning the name of God as a sin of no small weight. "Above all things, my brethren," says he, "swear not." But why "above all things," if not because it is a sin in a peculiar manner hateful and offensive in the sight of God? The passionate man may plead the fire of a warm disposition; the gloomy sullenness of the morose may urge the power of an unhappy complexion; but the profaner of the name of God has no such plea. Common reason teaches us to reverence the majesty of the Supreme Being; and no corruption of our nature tempts us to profane that name which we all know it is

our duty to adore. But further, besides the guilt of this practice in itself, it unhappily leads to a sin of a still more enormous magnitude—to that of perjury. This should incline all to contribute their endeavours by advice, by example, by reproof, or any other method, to suppress the common practice of profaning the name of God; since the pernicious sin of perjury, by which the character, property, or life of any person whatever may be endangered—a sin which has a tendency to destroy all mutual confidence, and to subvert all civil society—is in a great degree owing to it. I shall conclude with some short admonitions, in order to prevent the growth or continuance of this sin. 1. He who would avoid the habit or custom must beware of the first step or tendency to it. It is a maxim in spiritual as well as bodily disorders, to check the first appearance of a disease, lest it should grow inveterate, and at length incurable. And, therefore, we should do well to avoid all vehemence of assertion, all violence of passion, as dangerous approaches to this sin. 2. We may observe the danger of yielding to the first impulses of passion, since even an apostle, in a short space of time, was led on from a bare denial to bitter and violent imprecations. When the mind is hurried on by the impetuosity of violent passion, oaths are often found the readiest way to discharge the heat of resentment; and the mind, not under the conduct of reason, vents a sinful passion by a more sinful execration. 3. Let us possess our minds with the most respectful and awful sentiments of the greatness and goodness and majesty of the Supreme Being. This is the most rational and effectual means to prevent us from prostituting and profaning His sacred name. Let us ever preserve an awful and reverential regard for the majesty of Heaven; let us not speak or think of God but with veneration; let the words of our mouth, as well as the meditations of our heart, be ever acceptable in His sight; let us ever consult His honour, and “Hallowed be His name.” (*G. Carr, B.A.*) *A just rebuke*:—After Dr. Scudder's return from India, he was on a steamboat with his son, when he heard a person using profane language. Accosting him, he said, “This boy was born and brought up in a heathen country and a land of idolatry; but in all his life he never heard a man blaspheme his Maker until now.” The man apologised and moved away ashamed. *Profanity*:—Profanity is the tribute which the devil's servants pay to their master as token of allegiance. (*New Handbook of Illustration.*)

Ver. 13. *Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour.*—*Against fraud*:—1. The purchaser is guilty of fraud when he makes use of falsehood or low cunning to diminish the value of any commodity in the estimation of its proprietor. He likewise defrauds his neighbour when he takes advantage of his ignorance to obtain anything for less than its real value; when he receives any part of his property and applies it to his own use, without being careful to make him the equitable return, at the time when he may reasonably expect it; and lastly, when he makes that wise and merciful institution of the legislature, which was only intended for the security of those whom misfortune hath rendered incapable of answering the demands of equity, a protection for extravagance and knavery. 2. The seller defrauds his neighbour when he takes advantage of the ignorance or mistakes of the purchaser, or makes use of arts to impose upon his judgment. 3. The master, or he who employs labourers under him for hire, acts a dishonest part when he lays upon them burdens too heavy to be borne; when he requires harder or longer labour from them than was at first agreed upon, without making them a proportionable acknowledgment; or when he deprives them of their wages, or withholds them beyond a reasonable time. 4. The labourer, or servant, acts contrary to the rules of equity, and defrauds his neighbour when, without good reason, he quits the business he hath undertaken and leaves his master in difficulty; when he performs his engagements in a negligent and defective manner; or when he takes advantage of the confidence which his master hath placed in him, to embezzle or injure his property. I proceed to lay before you the principal argument, to guard you against all the low arts of fraud and deceit, and to enforce the observance of the strictest honour and most perfect equity in your dealings. I. And, in the first place, let it be considered that the observance of the injunction of the text is of THE HIGHEST IMPORTANCE TO THE WELFARE OF SOCIETY. What would be the consequence if injustice and knavery were daily to gain ground in the world, and at last to become universally prevalent? surely nothing less than universal confusion and wretchedness. On the contrary, were all unrighteousness and deceit banished from the earth, what a long train of evils would take their flight with them! what uninterrupted peace and harmony, what perfect satisfaction and happiness would ensue!

II. But it may be observed, farther, that THE VIRTUE OF HONESTY IS OF ESSENTIAL IMPORTANCE TO THE HAPPINESS OF INDIVIDUALS. The honest man is most secure from disappointment in business, and has the fairest prospect of success in his undertakings. It often happens that the artful and designing knave is discovered, and his schemes of iniquity are blasted, before he hath accomplished his purpose. After much care and labour, and many fears and anxieties, he may very possibly betray himself and frustrate his own designs. But the honest man pursues the plain and beaten path of diligence, prudence and integrity, till he gradually obtains a competence which he can behold with satisfaction and enjoy with pleasure. Honesty is likewise the best guard of our reputation. Let two men be in every other respect equal; if the one have the character of an upright and good man, and the other be deemed treacherous and fraudulent, it will be no difficult thing to determine which will be generally espoused, employed and assisted, and which will be treated with neglect and contempt. The honest man likewise enjoys the continual happiness of being satisfied from himself. If he enjoys an abundance of the good things of life, he hath the happiness to reflect that it is the fruit of his honest industry and the blessing of heaven. Or if he meets with disappointment and trouble, he hath this for his consolation, that "they have not befallen him for any iniquity in his hands"; and can triumph, if not in the success of his undertakings, in the innocence of his life. Let it be remembered, in the last place, that all injustice and fraud are highly displeasing to the Almighty, and that uprightness and honour will always be acceptable in His sight. (*W. Enfield.*)

Unjust dealing repudiated:—A customer of Messrs. Thomas Adams and Co., of Nottingham, from whom they were in the habit of receiving considerable orders, requested that besides Thomas Adams and Co's ticket, the firm would affix the ticket of this customer, marked with a larger number of yards than was really in the piece. Pressure having been put on some of the salesmen, the thing had actually been done a few times, when it was brought under the notice of Mr. Adams. At that period trade was exceedingly bad, and orders scarce, yet, as soon as he was apprised of the facts, he boldly declared to his customer that he could be no party to a transaction so unjust, and that such misleading tickets could not again be affixed to goods going forth from his warehouse. The customer was exceedingly angry at this practical rebuke of his injustice, and withdrew all his orders immediately. After a time, however, he reopened the account on a scale as large as ever, and was content to deal with Mr. Adams on his own terms. (*H. A. Page.*)

Sad result of an unpaid bill:—A wealthy banker, who is noted for his large subscriptions to charities, and for his kindly habits of private benevolence, was called on by his pastor, one evening, and asked to go with him to the help of a man who had attempted suicide. They found the man in a wretched house, in an alley not far from the banker's dwelling. The front room was a cobbler's shop; behind it, on a miserable bed, in the kitchen, lay the poor shoemaker, with a gaping gash in his throat, while his wife and children were gathered about him. "We have been without food for days," said the woman, when he returned. "It is not my husband's fault. He is a hard-working, sober man. But he could neither get work, nor pay for that which he had done. To-day he went for the last time to collect a debt due to him by a rich family, but the gentleman was not at home. My husband was weak from fasting, and seeing us starving drove him mad. So it ended that way," turning to the fainting, motionless figure on the bed. The banker, having fed and warmed the family, hurried home, opened his desk and took out a file of little bills. All his large debts were promptly met, but he was apt to be careless about the accounts of milk, bread, &c., because they were so petty. He found there a bill of Michael Goodlow's for repairing children's shoes, £2. Michael Goodlow was the suicide. It was the banker's unpaid debt which had brought these people to the verge of the grave, and driven this man to desperation, while, at the very time, the banker had given away hundreds in charity. The cobbler recovered, and will never want a friend while the banker lives, nor will a small unpaid bill ever again be found on the banker's table. No man has a right to be generous until his debts are paid; and the most efficient use of money is not alone in almsgiving, but to pay liberally and promptly the people whom we employ. The wages of him that is hired.—

Fairness to hired labourers:—I. WORK IS A JUST BASIS FOR AN EQUITABLE CLAIM. Therefore it should be paid for, not patronisingly, nor grudgingly, but as a due. The labourer has given you his time, strength, ability, and ingenuity; he has a right to an equivalent from you, and should not be treated ignominiously, but respectfully, in asking a just return. II. WAGES CANNOT RIGHTEOUSLY BE DEFERRED

AFTER WORK IS DONE. During a day of toil the labourer has put his capital into your service, spent his life for that period for your advantage and gain. You are to that extent his debtor; to detain his wages is to make yourself more his debtor, and delay in payment should be compensated with increment. "Short reckonings make long friends." III. MASTERS SHOULD STUDY THE POSITION AND COMFORT OF THOSE THEY EMPLOY. A poor man has no capital, wants prompt settlement; he lives day by day upon his hard earnings. His strength—expended by the day's toil—must be replenished for the morrow's work. To hold back the means for his nourishment is to rob him of the morrow's capital, his replenished energy. And he may have dependants in his lowly home waiting to share in the earnings of the day. Hold not back his dues "all night until the morning," lest your inconsiderateness inflict privation and embitter poverty (Deut. xxiv. 14, 15; Jer. xxxii. 13; Mal. iii. 5; James v. 4). (*W. H. Jellie.*) *God's consideration for hired labourers*:—What tender care is here! The High and Mighty One that inhabiteth eternity can take knowledge of the thoughts and feelings that spring up in the heart of a poor labourer. He knows and takes into account the expectations of such an one in reference to the fruit of his day's toil. The wages will, naturally, be looked for. The labourer's heart counts upon them; the family meal depends upon them. Oh! let them not be held back. Send not the labourer home with a heavy heart, to make the heart of his wife and family heavy likewise. By all means give him that for which he has wrought, to which he has a right, and on which his heart is set. Thus does our God take notice of the very throbbings of the labourer's heart, and make provision for his rising expectations. Precious grace! Most tender, thoughtful, touching, condescending love! The bare contemplation of such statutes is sufficient to throw one into a flood of tenderness. Could any one read them and thoughtlessly dismiss a poor labourer, not knowing whether he and his family have wherewithal to meet the cravings of hunger? (*C. H. Mackintosh.*) *Debt forbid* *ten*:—Far from defrauding, or withholding what is due to thy neighbour, thou shalt not even delay giving him what he is entitled to. This precept is directly pointed against incurring debt. Fraudulent bankruptcies, and pretexts for withholding payments, are condemned by it; but remaining in debt to any one is also pointedly condemned. "Owe no man anything, but to love one another." In James v. 4, this is spoken of as a sin of the last days. (*A. A. Bonar.*)

Ver. 14. **Thou shalt not curse the deaf.**—*The weak protected*:—I. THE MEANNESS OF THE CONDUCT HERE REBUKED. Dishonourable dealing, commercial sharp-practice, trading upon the defects of others, issuing delusive prospectuses to entrap the unwary, traducing our fellows behind their backs so that they cannot learn and answer the charges brought against them—all such action deserves our reprobation and avoidance. The natural ills of humanity call for commiseration and help, rather than for ridicule and maltreatment. Where weakness has been self-incurred, where ignorance is wilful, there is less need of sympathy. Let our young people be early imbued with the feeling that it is wrong to trample upon the defenceless. II. THE WAY TO GUARD AGAINST INVASION OF THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS. "But shalt fear thy God." 1. Reverence for Jehovah is the best security against violation of His statutes. Remember, that to transgress is to grieve our heavenly Father, to show ourselves unmindful of His claims. 2. The omniscience of Jehovah should restrain from the commission of unfair deeds. He hears every word and sees every act, though the deaf and the blind cannot. Let not mean, cowardly performances expect to pass unnoticed, unpunished. III. THE COMFORT THE WEAK MAY DERIVE FROM THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THEY ARE UNDER THE PROTECTION OF GOD. He is seen to cherish them, to make provision for their need; He puts His strong right arm around them, shelters them under His wing. We cannot believe that His fostering care is denied to any class of the infirm, in body, mind, or spirit. (*S. R. Aldridge, B.A.*) *Protection of the infirm*:—Persons stricken with some defect which renders them helpless, stand under God's special protection; it would be heartless and impious to "curse the deaf," who is unaware of the attacks made upon him, which may involve calumnies, and which he is unable to rebut; and it would be cruel indeed to "put a stumbling-block before the blind," to whom every right-minded man should be eager to "serve as eyes"; a crime like the latter was publicly cursed on Mount Ebal; and in both cases the law warns the offender, "Thou shalt fear thy God," who hears if there is no other ear to listen, who sees if there is no other eye to see, and who, to punish thy wickedness, can strike thee with the same afflictions:

hence the same menace, "Thou shalt fear thy God," is repeated with respect to the treatment of old and infirm men, of poor persons, of dependents, and servants. Philo inveighs vehemently against the inhumanity here forbidden, and observes that those who are guilty of it, "would not spare even the dead, in the excess of their cruelty, but according to a common proverb, would slay the slain again." Jewish tradition applies the second command of our verse figuratively to insidious advice, or false information given to a man who is in ignorance or perplexity, whether on some question of learning or on some matter of business. The law of Manu inflicts a pecuniary fine upon any one who taunts a person with being one-eyed or lame or deformed. (*M. M. Kalisch, Ph.D.*) *No advantage to be taken of incapacity*:—This base action of reviling or cursing a deaf person is here condemned. But that is not all; there is something more forbidden by this law; for it seems to be of a proverbial nature, and the general meaning is, Thou shalt not take the sordid advantage of a man's incapacity to defend himself, and hurt him either in his body, his fortunes, or his reputation. To abuse an absent person, to calumniate people in secret, to attack another's reputation in the dark and in disguise, to defame those who are dead, to hurt in any manner those who are unable to help and redress themselves, all this may be called, To curse the deaf. (*J. Jortin, D.D.*) *The absent not to be slandered*:—So did St. Augustine, that worthy father, abhor this vice, that over his table where he dined he wrote two verses, to tell all them that sat with him, if they carped at any person absent, that table was not for them, nor the guests welcome to him. (*Bp. Babington.*)

Ver. 15. In righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.—*On judging our neighbour in righteousness*:—To judge our neighbour in righteousness, it is our duty to consider those motives which may corrupt our judgment. When we set ourselves to reflect how far we have cultivated this species of justice, we deceive ourselves by quoting the examples of those who have become dear to us from particular circumstances; by citing the judgments we have made of friends, of kindred, of men who have embarked with us in common designs, and been actuated by the same principles. Doubtless, we are just enough in all these instances; here we feel real sorrow at the faults of others, and do all, and even more than the most righteous judges ought to do; but if we really, and faithfully, wish to fulfil this great duty, we are to examine how far we have righteously judged those to whom we never have been connected in friendship; those whom chance has separated from us by rank, and wealth; nature by talents; education by opinions; those who have been opposed to us in questions which try the passions; those from whom we have suffered disrespect, injury, and contempt. If, in the awful moments of self-judgment, we can satisfy ourselves that we never wished that calumny to be true which accorded with our warmest passions; that we have never been disappointed by that innocence which baffled our resentment, that the infirmities of our nature have rarely stifled this tenderness for the good fame of others; then, and not till then, are we entitled to conceive that we have obeyed this precept of the Scriptures, and judged our fellow creatures in righteousness. (*S. Smith, M.A.*) *Just judgment to be administered*:—There must be in us no affectation of kindness to the poor, any more than fawning flattery of the great. Especially in matters of judgment the judge must be impartial. The eye of God is on him; and as He is a just God, and without iniquity, He delights to see His own attributes shadowed forth in the strict integrity of an earthly judge. If these are God's holy principles, ah! then the misery and oppression and suffering of the lower classes will in no way serve as a reason for their acquittal at His bar, if they be found guilty. Suffering in this world is no blotting out of sin. Hence, we find at Christ's appearing "the great men and the mighty men, and every bondman," cried to the rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne" (Rev. vii. 15). (*A. A. Bonar.*) *Righteous judgment*:—The power of the court of Areopagus at Athens was very great; and it is said to have been the first court that ever determined upon questions of life and death. It was customary to hold its sittings in the night only, and without light. The reason of this singular practice is said to have been, that the members might not be prejudiced for or against any accused person, by seeing his gestures and looks. Truth only was regarded, and no attempt to warp the opinion of the judges was permitted. (*Univ. Hist.*) *Impartiality in judgment*:—The Grecians placed justice betwixt Leo and Libra, thereby signifying that there must not be only courage in executing, but also indifference in determining. The Egyptians express the same by the hieroglyphical figure of a

man without hands, winking with his eyes ; whereby is meant an uncorrupt judge, who hath no hands to receive bribes, no eyes to behold the person of the poor, or respect the person of the rich. And before our tribunals, we commonly have the picture of a man holding a balance in one hand, and a sword in the other, signifying by the balance, just judgment ; by the sword, execution of judgment. For as the balance putteth no difference between gold and lead, but giveth an equal or unequal poise to them both, not giving a greater weight to the gold for the excellency of the metal because it is gold, nor a less to the lead for the baseness of it because it is lead : so they were with an even hand to weigh the poor man's cause as well as the rich. But it is most notably set out by the throne of the house of David (Psa. cxxii. 5), which was placed in the gate of the city toward the sun rising ; in the gate, to signify that all which came in and out by the gate of the city might indifferently be heard, the poor as well as the rich, and might have free access and regress to and from the judgment-seat ; and toward the rising of the sun, in token that their judgment should be as clear from corruption as the sun is clear in his chiefest brightness. (*J. Spencer.*)

Ver. 16. *Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer.*—*Talebearing and slander.*—I. CHARACTER IS IN THE KEEPING, and therefore at the mercy of acquaintances. 1. Therefore supremely value each other's good name. 2. Jealously defend a worthy reputation. 3. Scornfully silence the unproved rumours of evils. II. CHARACTER MAY BE RUTHLESSLY SHATTERED by sinister whisperings. 1. For listeners are ready to entertain and repeat slander. "Man's inhumanity to man!" 2. Aspersions feed on the inventiveness of malice. 3. Reputation is easily damaged. That which only a lifetime can build an hour may defame. III. CHARACTER IS SO PRECIOUS that its traducers should be loathed. 1. Dread a talebearer as a destroying pestilence. 2. He who wrongs another's reputation may next wrong yours. By heeding his slanders you encourage his vile trade, and slander must find new victims! 3. Put to shame all talebearers with ruthlessness severity. Note—1. There is enough of woe abroad without increasing it. 2. As we need our many evils to be pitied by man and pardoned by God, let us with "charity hide sins," not expose them. 3. There is grace in Christ, and energy in the Holy Spirit, by which to perfect a good life and win a good name, which even enemies of religion shall be unable to defame or destroy. 4. The light of the final judgment will refute all slander, and bring every secret thing to the open gaze of the world. (*W. H. Jellie.*) *Mischief of talebearing.*—The carrying of a tale, and reporting what such an one said or such an one did, is the way to sow such grudges, to kindle such heart-burnings between persons, as oftentimes break forth and flame to the consumption of families, courts, and perhaps at length of cities and kingdoms. The mischief such incendiaries do is incredible, as being indeed for the most part inevitable. And a vine or a rose-tree may as well flourish when there is a secret worm lurking and gnawing at the root of them, as the peace of those societies thrive that have such concealed plagues wrapt up in their hearts and bowels. (*R. South.*) *Scandal rebuked.*—One day, in the presence of a pious tanner, at Elberfield, some people were tearing their neighbours' characters to pieces. Diedrich, the tanner, was silent. "You say nothing," said they. "You see," replied he, "I am a little like a bankrupt. He may be engaged in a most animated conversation, but I have always remarked, when the subject turns upon bankruptcy, he is suddenly dumb. I, too, am a bankrupt ; the defects you are just reproaching your neighbours with I find in myself, and that shuts my mouth." (*Pastor Krummacher.*) *Talebearing condemned.*—The following is related of the late J. J. Gurney, by one who, as a child, was often of his family circle :—One night—I remember it well—I received a severe lesson on the sin of evil speaking. Severe I thought it then, and my heart rose in childish anger against him who gave it ; but I had not lived long enough in this world to know how much mischief a child's thoughtless talk may do, and how often it happens that great talkers run off from the straight line of truth. I was talking very fast about some female relative, who did not stand very high in my esteem, and was about to speak further of her failings of temper. In a few moments my eyes caught a look of such calm and steady displeasure, that I stopped short. There was no mistaking the meaning of that dark, speaking eye ; it brought the colour to my face, and confusion and shame to my heart. I was silent for a few moments, when Joseph John Gurney asked, very gravely, "Dost thou not know any good thing to tell us of her?" I did not answer. The question was more seriously asked, "Think ; is there nothing

good thou canst tell us of her?" "Oh yes, I know some good things, certainly, but——" "Would it not have been better, then, to relate these good things than to have told us that which must lower her in our esteem? Since there is good to relate, would it not be kinder to be silent on the evil? Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, thou knowest." (*Great Thoughts.*) *The talebearer*:—One celebrated nation of antiquity used to express this man's character by a very significant figure. They called a talebearer a "seed picker." They gave him the same name which they used for a bird which goes about everywhere picking up seeds. There are men in the world who live by their seed collecting; by going about here and there from house to house, and gathering together all the little stories which can be told or made about the neighbours who are dwelling all the time securely by them and ignorant of the calumnies by which they are assailed. Yes, the "seed collector," the man who goes about gathering anecdotes, great and small, about his neighbours, and retailing them again as he goes, is a common character everywhere. I wish that I could hold up the mirror to him for his own conviction. I am sure he would be ashamed, I believe he would be sorry if he saw himself faithfully portrayed. (*Dean Vaughan.*)

Ver. 17. Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy brother.—Am I my brother's keeper?—
I. THE ILL-CONDUCT OF A NEIGHBOUR DEMANDS A PERSONAL REBUKE. 1. This injunction supposes cognisance of another's actions. Man was made for society, and its value consists greatly in taking an affectionate interest in those about us. 2. It is often easier for a bystander to detect a fault than for the one actively concerned in the deed. Our friend may be in ignorance of his guilt, and a word of reproof may open his eyes. What we imagined was done with intent may prove to have been thoughtlessly wrought. 3. The text inculcates what is acknowledged to be a hard duty, one which most are willing to relegate to others. We may fear some cutting retort, "Who made thee a judge over us?" We know that our neighbour's vanity may be wounded, and he may inflict some blow in return. Perhaps the duty is most difficult when the wrong has been perpetrated upon ourselves. Pride urges us to keep silence, and we nourish a sentiment of undeserved injury which rather flatters our conception of ourselves. Yet Jesus Christ re-enforced the law. 4. Regard for God demands the observance of the text. Every transgression is sin against Him. 5. The welfare of our neighbour requires it. **II. TO REBUKE A NEIGHBOUR IS THE SUREST METHOD TO PREVENT OUR HATING HIM FOR HIS EVIL ACTION.** 1. Hatred proceeds from the perception of something repugnant to our feelings, and, in the case supposed, of something that is distasteful to our moral sentiments. An outrage upon good taste is committed—a deed that is offensive to our judgment of what is congruous to the relationship and circumstances under consideration. This just resentment will be soothed by the recantation and improvement of the transgressor consequent on the reproof administered. We learn to distinguish between the sinner and the sin. 2. Our perception of wrong is clearer and more intense when the injury is done to ourselves, and the hatred threatens to become stronger. The picture is directed towards ourselves, and we get a good front view of it. It is the more necessary, therefore, to take steps to abate ensuing enmity. We shall relieve our burdened breasts by expressing our sense of the unrighteousness of our neighbour's behaviour, the utterance of resentment being a sentence of condemnation that satisfies to a certain extent our love of justice. Holy indignation will have been vented, and to that degree appeased. 3. On the other hand, the repression of reproof aggravates hatred. The concealment of our knowledge genders a sore that spreads till our every sight and thought of the man is one of utter dislike. By the sin of a brother we ourselves are thus betrayed into dire sin against the very purport of the Decalogue. We do not love, but hate our neighbour, and "he that hateth his brother is a murderer." Whereas "if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." Thy reproof may be "an excellent oil, which shall not break his head." **III. THE REPROOF WILL DISCHARGE US FROM ALL GUILT OF TACIT PARTICIPATION IN OUR NEIGHBOUR'S SIN.** The marginal rendering is preferable, "that thou bear not sin for him" or "on his account." To witness a crime and not make an endeavour to stop it is to be an abettor of it. (*S. R. Aldridge, B.A.*) *On reproving sin in others*:—**I. THE CHRISTIAN DUTY OF REPROVING SIN IN OTHERS.** 1. Duty to God. (1) Filial relation. (2) Desire for Divine glory. (3) Conformity to mind of God. Now from these three principles arises the duty of the Christian to reprove sin in his brother, for he may say, "I cannot sincerely love God if I do not aim to please Him; I cannot be a child of God and suffer sin in my brother; I cannot be con-

formed to the example of Christ without aiming to counteract sin; I cannot but aim to destroy all that is opposed to the mind and will of God, and that is contrary to His glory." Here are three principles, then, to guide us, better than any especial rule. If it be asked, Shall I do good? or, How shall I do it? or, Will it be prudent to do it now? or, May not others do it better than I?—to all these inquiries the Christian may present these three principles as an answer. The God I love is displeased by sin; He is insulted—He is dishonoured. 2. Duty to neighbour. Love him as self. No outward act of what is called "good fellowship," no degree of goodwill or social intercourse can possibly make up for neglect of the soul. Now the exhortation in the text comes enforced by our duty to our neighbour. For what is it which is most injurious to our brother? It is sin. And shall I suffer sin on him? I should grieve, if I were to see him on the brink of a precipice or surrounded with devouring flames; if I saw that in his bosom was concealed a venomous serpent, or that he was about to lift a cup of deadly poison to his lips! And how, then, shall I suffer sin upon my brother? II. THE DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY OF DISCHARGING THIS DUTY. 1. There are a number of circumstantial difficulties, but these I shall not dwell upon here. 2. The chief difficulties are in the heart of the Christian himself. (1) The first which I shall mention, and that which will strike all, is the fear of man. This arises from—(a) The weakness of religious principle; (b) The strength of corruption. (2) The love of approbation. That which is so unequivocally required by the Scriptures is too frequently disliked by the Christian, because he knows that it will bring on him a portion of contempt. (3) The slight views we take of sin add to the difficulty. And what can prove our fallen state more than this? Oh, if we viewed sin aright, how active should we be! (4) It is difficult, because to reprove sin requires peculiar qualifications. It requires great faithfulness. If you rebuke sin slightly, it will lead the sinner to suppose that you think slightly of it, and that may lead him to think slightly of it too. If you reprove without fidelity, you do no good. And yet joined with this must be much meekness. There must be that humble, retiring meekness which becomes a man; it is not God, it is not angels rebuking sin, but man—man rebuking, who needs to be rebuked—man who has sinned reproving man who has sinned. He who reproves, therefore, must do it with meekness, saying, "Who hath made me to differ?" There must be also authority. We must not speak slightly, but as ambassadors of Heaven—as men speaking in the voice of God. But with this authority there must be humility; this must not be forgotten. There must be much zeal, and this zeal must be united with knowledge and judgment. Conclusion: The question may, perhaps, be asked, "Am I called upon to reprove sin at all times, and in reference to every man?" I think the principles I have laid down will furnish an answer to this question. Let us ask, Will it tend to advance the Divine glory and to promote the welfare of man? and we shall not then need any further inquiries. There may be cases—I can conceive of some such—when reproof should not be administered; there may be cases in which our neighbour should be drawn, and not driven. Yet the language of the text is positive: "Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him." In answer to the question, Is sin to be reproved at all times? I would say unquestionably not. There are times when a look will do much more than a word; there are seasons when a marked silence will do unquestionably more good than any exhortation; there are cases, also, when lightness and levity so prevail as to counteract the effect of any kind of reproof. (*R. W. Sibthorp, B.D.*) *Brotherly admonition*.—I. WHAT BROTHERLY REPROOF OR CORRECTION IS. It is an act of love and charity, whereby we endeavour to reduce our offending brother to repentance and reformation. 1. By words. Remonstrating to them the greatness of their sin; the scandal which they give to others, either by encouraging or saddening them; the reproach which they bring upon religion; and the danger which they bring upon their own souls. 2. Where words have proved ineffectual, we may try how deeds can prevail—prevail, I say, either to deliver them, or, at least, to deliver thine own soul from death. (1) If they be our inferiors, over whom we have authority, either as magistrates, or parents, or the like, we ought, when admonition is fruitless, to reprove them by correction and punishment. If they will not hear they must feel rebuke. This discipline, if it be seasonably and prudently used, is so far from being any act of cruelty that it is an act of the greatest charity that can be, both to them and to others. (2) If they be our equals, over whom we have no jurisdiction nor coercive power, we are then to rebuke them, if they continue obstinate after Christian admonition, by withdrawing ourselves from all necessary converse with them—not

so as to deny them the offices of courtesy and our charitable assistance to promote their temporal good, but to break off all intimacy with them, not to make such dissolute persons our chosen companions (2 Thess. iii. 6). And to these two things are necessarily previous and antecedent—1. Instruction and conviction. Could we but skilfully convince our brother by representing the odiousness of such and such sins, to which we know he is addicted, possibly we might spare ourselves in that which is the most ungrateful part of this work—I mean personal reflection, and leave it to his own conscience to reprove himself, and to apply it home with “Thou art the man.” And—2. It is necessary that we watch over our brother, not so as to be insidious spies upon him, officiously to pry into his actions, and busily to concern ourselves in all he doth. (1) We ought so to watch over our brother as to give him timely caution if we see him in any danger through temptation or passion, and to admonish him to stand upon his guard, to recollect himself and beware he be not surprised or injured by such an approaching sin. (2) If we have observed any miscarriages in him, we are to watch the best seasons and all the fittest circumstances in which to remind him of it, that so our reproof may be well accepted and become effectual. II. But indeed, which is the second thing, it is not so hard a matter to know what it is as it is DIFFICULT conscientiously and faithfully to practise it. 1. Many are afraid to reprove sin, lest they should incur displeasure, weaken their secular interest, ruin their dependencies, and bring some mischief upon themselves by exasperating the offenders against them. But these are poor, low, carnal considerations. Where matter of duty is in question, it is very necessary for every Christian to be of an undaunted courage and resolution. 2. Others, again, are ashamed to reprove sin. And whereas many profligate wretches glory in their shame, these, on the contrary, are ashamed of that which would be their glory. Either they doubt they shall be thought but troublesome and hypocritical intermeddlers, or else, possibly, being conscious to themselves of many miscarriages, they suspect their reproofs will be upbraidingly retorted upon themselves; and so, by reproving the faults of others, they shall but give an occasion to have their own ripped up and exposed, and so they think it the safer way to say nothing. III. It is a most NECESSARY duty. The greatest good you can do in the world is to pluck up these briars and thorns with which it is overgrown. IV. I shall give you some brief RULES and DIRECTIONS when you ought to reprove, and how you ought to manage your reproofs, so as they may be most beneficial to your brother. And some of them shall be negatives, and others shall be positives. 1. For the negative rules take these that follow. (1) I ought not to reprove my brother if I have no certain knowledge of his offence. (2) It is not necessary to reprove where I have reason to conclude that others, of more prudence and interest in the party, either have already or will more effectually perform it. (3) We ought not to give sharp reproofs for small offences. (4) We are not to reprove those whom we have reason to believe are such desperate wretches that our reproofs would but exasperate them to sin the more for a reproof. 2. Let us now proceed to lay down some positive rules and directions for the right managing of our reproofs. And here—(1) If thou wouldst reprove with success, observe right circumstances of time and place. And let the one be as opportune, and the other as private, as thou canst. Now, usually, it is no fit season for reproof—(a) Presently, as soon as the sin is committed; for then the heat is not over, nor the uproar of the passions and affections appeased. In all likelihood a reproof as yet would but irritate. Nor yet—(b) Is a time of mirth and joy fit for reproof; for that will look like a piece of envy, as if we were malicious at their prosperity, and therefore studied to cast in somewhat that might disturb them, and so they will be apt to interpret it. Nor—(c) Is a time of exceeding great sadness and sorrow a proper season for reproof; for this will look like hostility and hatred, as if we designed utterly to overwhelm and dispatch them. But the fittest opportunity for this duty is when they are most calm, their passions hushed, and their reason (with which you are to deal) again reseated upon its throne. (2) If thou wouldst have thy reproofs successful, reprove with all gentleness and meekness, without giving any railing or reviling terms. (3) Though our reproofs must be meek and gentle, yet must they be quick and vivacious also; for as charity requires the one, so doth zeal the other, and the best and most equal temper is rightly to mix these two, that at once we may show meekness to his person (“For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God,” James i. 20) and sharpness against his sin (for a remiss prover will make but a slow penitent). (4) Let all thy reproofs be given as secretly and privately as possibly thou canst, otherwise thou wilt seem not so much to aim at thy brother’s reformation as at his shame and

confusion. (5) Reprove not one who is greatly thy superior, unless it be at a respectful distance. Towards such we must not use downright and blunt rebukes, but rather insinuate things into them with address and artifice. (6) If thou wouldst have thy reproofs effectual, especially beware that thou thyself art not guilty of those sins which thou reprovest in another. V. Some MOTIVES which may quicken you to the conscientious discharge of this duty. And here, next to the express command of Almighty God, whose authority alone ought to prevail against all the difficulties which we either find or fancy in the way of obedience thereunto, consider the great benefit which may redound both to the reprover and reprov'd.

1. To the reprover. (1) Thou shalt hereby provide thyself a friend who may take the same liberty to reprove thee when it shall be needful and for thy great good. (2) Thou wilt hereby entitle thyself to that great and precious promise (Dan. xii. 3). (3) Thou shalt increase thy own graces and comforts more than possibly thou couldst do by separating thyself from them. Thy graces will be more confirmed, because reproving of others will engage thee to a greater watchfulness over thyself. Thy comforts also will be increased, because a conscientious discharge of this duty will be to thee a great evidence of the integrity and sincerity of thy heart. 2. The practice of this duty will be greatly profitable unto him that is reprov'd. How knowest thou but it may be a means to turn him from his iniquity? and so thou shalt prevent a multitude of sins and save a soul from death (James v. 20). (*Bp. E. Hopkins.*) *The duty of brotherly admonition or reproof*:—I. EXPLAIN THE DUTY. "We are members one of another." Then I may not act with a view to myself alone. If there be thus an obligation on me, from the very fact of my creation, to have reference in all which I do to the benefit of my brethren, how am I to shift off from myself the duty of brotherly admonition or reproof? If I see that a brother or neighbour is pursuing a course which is likely to provoke God's wrath, and must issue in ruin, then it can be no matter of option with me; I must be altogether and grievously at fault if I "suffer sin upon him," and do not strive to bring him to repentance and amendment. It is bound on us that we do this by word, seeking to set faithfully before the offender the bitter consequences of his offence—invoking him by his hopes and his fears that he turn away from evil. The righteous have not protested against wickedness by boldly separating themselves from it. They have denounced heresy and impiety, but they have not been sufficiently diligent in digging the gulf or throwing up the rampart between themselves and those whom they profess to rebuke. II. STATE RULES AND MOTIVES. 1. There must be a diligent and prayerful observation of both the relative and the absolute circumstances of the offending party, so that we may decide whether the interference is likely to be spurned as an unwarrantable intrusion or provoke to additional sin. 2. Supposing that neither of these results be likely to follow, and supposing the offending party is one who, if I reproach, he may probably be advantaged by reproof, then we give, as a second rule, that an exact proportion should be preserved between the offence committed and the rebuke which it receives. It is very easy, but, at the same time, infinitely removed from all that is Christian, to upbraid the sinner in place of rebuking the sin. Whereas, if we would act up to the spirit of our text, the rebuke should never part from our lips which has not the double object of love for the offender and hatred of the offence. The brotherly correction, which alone can be expected to work its way to the heart, must bear upon itself the evident marks of having been dictated by genuine affection. 3. The reproof should be given privately rather than publicly. 4. If you hope that your admonition may carry any weight, take heed that you be not yourself chargeable with the fault that you reprove in another. The force of example is vastly greater than that of words, and the reproof which rebounds on itself leaves no permanent impression on the rock against which it was thrown. 5. These are simple rules, which you may all understand and apply. Their motives are so involved in them that it is unnecessary to multiply reasons urging to the duty under review. Enough for us to know that he who neglects the duty suffers sin on his brother; enough for us to be assured that "they who turn many to righteousness shall shine as stars for ever and ever." And, equipped with the fear of partaking in the guilt which we do not rebuke, and with the hope of securing the glories of those who turn souls to the Lord, we have all which can brace us up to the vigorous effort of checking the rule and progress of impiety. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The duty of reproving our neighbour*:—I. WHAT DUTY IS ENJOINED, AND

WHAT SHOULD BE REBUKED. 1. To tell any one of his fault, "Thou shalt not suffer sin upon him." Sin, therefore, is the thing we are called to reprove, or rather him that commits sin. Do all we can to convince him of his fault, and lead him in the

right way. 2. Love requires that we should also warn him of error, which would naturally lead to sin. 3. Avoid reproving for anything that is disputable. II. WHO THEY ARE WE ARE CALLED TO REPROVE. 1. There are some sinners we are forbidden to rebuke. "Cast not your pearls before swine." 2. Our "neighbour" is every child of man, all that have souls to be saved. 3. The reproving is not to be done in the same degree to every one. First, it is particularly done to our parents, if needing it; then to brothers and sisters; then to relatives; then to our servants; to our fellow-citizens; members of the same religious society; watch over each other that we may not suffer sin upon our brother. To neglect this is to "hate our brother in our heart"; and "he that hateth his brother is a murderer." It imperils our own salvation to neglect this duty. III. WHAT SPIRIT AND MANNER SHOULD MARK OUR PERFORMANCE OF THIS DUTY. 1. There is considerable difficulty in doing it aright. Although some are specially qualified to do it by grace, and skilful by practice. But, though difficult, we must do it; and God will aid us. 2. How most effectual? When done in "the spirit of love," of tender goodwill for our neighbour, as for one who is the son of our common Father, as for one for whom Christ died, that he might be a partaker of salvation. 3. Yet speak in the spirit of humility. "Not think of yourself more highly than you ought to think." Not feeling or showing the least contempt of those whom you reprove; disclaiming all self-superiority; owning the good there is in him. 4. In the spirit of meekness. "For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." Anger begets anger, not holiness. 5. Put no trust in yourself; in your wisdom or abilities; speak in the spirit of prayer. 6. And as for the outward manner, as well as the spirit, in which it should be done; let there be a frank outspokenness, a plain and artless declaration of disinterested love. It will pierce like lightning. 7. With great seriousness, showing that you are really in earnest. A ludicrous reproof makes little impression, or is taken ill. 8. Yet there are exceptions when a little well-placed raillery will pierce deeper than solid argument. "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes." 9. Adapt the manner to the occasion. By few or many words as the situation determines; or by no words at all, but a look, a gesture, a sigh. Such silent reproof may be attended by the power of God. 10. Watch for a fair occasion. "A word spoken in season, how good it is." Catch the time when his mind is soft and mild. 11. But should a man be left alone when intoxicated? I dare not say so; for instances are forthcoming of a reproof then having bad good effects. Despire not the poor drunkard. Many of them are self-condemned, but they despair. He that tells a man there is no help for him is a liar from the beginning. "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." 12. You that are diligent in this labour of love be not discouraged. You have need of patience. (*John Wesley, M.A.*) *Brotherly reproof*:—Can a physician show his love better than by telling his patient his disease, and declaring unto him the means whereby to cure it? Can a man, meeting his brother wandering out of his way in hills and dales, in woods and wildernesses, show his love better unto him than by bringing him into the way, and laying his error before his face? So that no man can give a sounder testimony of his sincere heart and unfeigned love toward his brother than by dealing plainly with him when he walketh not uprightly. For a friend is unto the soul as physic unto the body, and the admonishing of our brother is as the director of a traveller. Let us therefore suffer the word of exhortation. Knowing that such as are out of order must be admonished, the feeble-minded must be comforted, the weak must be strengthened, the evil must be reproofed, the obstinate must be terrified and threatened. And let us not fret and rage against our brethren when we are checked and controlled for our sins. It is a sign we are persuaded and resolved to continue in our sins when we cannot abide to be reproofed, but are ready to say with Ahab: "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" The Word of God is good to him that walketh uprightly; and we shall find in the end, that open rebuke is better than secret love; yea, that the wounds of a lover are faithful, and the kisses of an enemy are pleasant. (*W. Attersoll.*) *Gentleness in reproof*:—It is written of Andrew Fuller that he could rarely be faithful without being severe; and, in giving reproof, he was often betrayed into intemperate zeal. Once, at a meeting of ministers, he took occasion to correct an erroneous opinion delivered by one of his brethren, and he laid on his censure so heavily that Ryland called out vehemently, in his own peculiar tone of voice, "Brother Fuller! Brother Fuller! you can never admonish a mistaken friend but you must take up a sledge-hammer and knock his brains out." Gentleness and affection should be evident in all our remonstrances; if a

nail be dipped in oil it will drive the more readily. There is a medium in our vehemence which discretion will readily suggest : we must not drown a child in washing it, nor cut off a man's foot to cure a corn. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *A successful reprovcr* :—Instead of a long enumeration of the qualities required in a successful reprovcr, we instance the case of Dr. Waugh. "At one of the half-yearly examinations at the Protestant Dissenters' Grammar School, Mill Hill, the headmaster informed the examiners that he had been exceedingly tried by the misconduct and perverseness of a boy who had done something very wrong, and who, though he acknowledged the fact, could not be brought to acknowledge the magnitude of the offence. The examiners were requested to expostulate with the boy, and try if he could be brought to feel and deplore it. Dr. Waugh was solicited to undertake the task, and the boy was, in consequence, brought before him. 'How long have you been in the school, my boy?' asked the doctor. 'Four months, sir.' 'When did you hear from your father last?' 'My father's dead, sir.' 'Ah! alas the day! 'tis a great loss—a great loss, that of a father; but God can make it up to you, by giving you a tender, affectionate mother.' On this the boy, who had previously seemed as hard as a flint, began to soften. The doctor proceeded: 'Well, laddie, where is your mother?' 'On her voyage home from India, sir.' 'Ay! good news for you, my boy. Do you love your mother?' 'Yes, sir.' 'And do you expect to see her soon?' 'Yes, sir.' 'Do you think she loves you?' 'Yes, sir, I am sure of it.' 'Then think, my dear laddie, think of her feelings when she comes home, and finds that, instead of your being in favour with every one, you are in such deep disgrace as to run the risk of expulsion, and yet are too hardened to acknowledge that you have done wrong. Winna ye break your poor mother's heart, think ye? Just think o' that, my lad.' The little culprit burst into a flood of tears, acknowledged his fault, and promised amendment." (*Ibid.*) *Reproving a swearer* :—I will give you an instance of how you ought to reprove the swearer, which I know to be true. It was by a friend of mine, and I don't mind telling you his name. He was a clergyman, now dead; he wrote some very valuable books; his name was Benjamin Field. He was staying at a Brighton boarding-house. At dinner, at the boarding-house, a young officer in the army swore. At the dinner-table Mr. Field took no notice at all. He waited his opportunity. In the evening, when Mr. Field came in from his walk, he found this young man alone in the drawing-room. He said to him, "Sir, you hurt my feelings very much at dinner." The young gentleman said, "Did I? I am exceedingly sorry. I don't know what you refer to. Did I speak of a friend of yours in a way you did not like?" "That is exactly what you did," Mr. Field replied. "You spoke of my greatest Friend in a way I did not like at all. You swore. And God is my greatest Friend. And you spoke of my greatest Friend in a way that pained me very much, and pained Him." Mr. Field talked to this young man a great deal; and he asked Mr. Field, before he left the room, to pray that God would forgive him, and he did so; and every day, while Mr. Field stayed at Brighton, he went up to that young man's bedroom in the morning of the day, and prayed with him. That was the way to reprove him. The result was, I believe, that young man was converted, turned to God by Mr. Field reproving him for swearing. (*J. Vaughan.*) *Reproof a Christian duty* :—Who is so kind and gentle as the surgeon with his knife? He that is to be cut cries, but cut he is; he that is to be cauterised cries, but cauterised he is. This is not cruelty: on no account let that surgeon's treatment be called cruelty. Cruel he is against the wounded part, that the patient may be cured; for if the wound be softly dealt with, the man is lost. Thus, then, I would advise that we love our brethren howsoever they may have sinned against us: that we let not affection toward them depart out of our hearts; and that, when need is, we exercise discipline toward them, lest by relaxation of discipline wickedness increase. (*St. Augustine.*) *Reproof hindered by consciousness of personal imperfection* :—A person who objects to tell a friend of his faults because he has faults of his own acts as a surgeon would who should refuse to dress another person's wounds because he had a dangerous one himself. (*R. Cecil.*) *Meekness in reproving* :—A parishioner, notoriously culpable for his inadequate discharge of certain official duties, received a private remonstrance from his pastor, Dean Alford, the force of which he attempted to evade by angrily retorting with a charge of negligence. In the course of the day the following was sent to him by the vicar: "Regarding my own pastoral deficiencies, I heartily thank you. I am deeply aware that I am not sufficient for these things, and only wish my place were better filled. At the same time the deficiencies of one man do not excuse another. Let

us both strive, and pray that we may be found diligent in our business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord our God, and do our best to live in charity and peace with one another, and with all men.—Believe me, your affectionate minister and friend, Henry Alford.” *Firmness in rebuke*:—When John Coleridge Patteson was at Eton he was secretary of the cricket eleven. The boys of the cricket and boat clubs had an annual dinner at the hotel at Slough. On these occasions songs of a low moral tone were sometimes sung. Patteson gave notice beforehand that he would not tolerate this, and one of the lads having begun such a song, and no notice being taken of his immediate remonstrance, he rose and left the dinner-table, a few others doing the same. He followed up this protest with an intimation that he must leave the club unless an apology were made; and his firmness gained the point and secured a condemnation of the abuse. *Beneficial rebuke*:—A most profane swearer in the Royal Engineers was remonstrated with by Sergeant Marjouram in New Zealand. He was disposed to be angry with his reprover, but the latter said to him: “Well, if I were to get behind your back and now and then give you a gentle push down the road to hell, I suppose you would think me a better friend than you do now for warning you before it be too late.” The man’s face quivered with emotion, and he rushed from the place. He soon returned, however, and exclaimed to his companions: “I’ll tell you what, chaps—I’m not going to lead this sort of life any longer, and to-morrow I shall begin a change.” Formerly the majority of his words were oaths, but from that day to the time of recording the incident, Marjouram did not hear him use one.

Ver. 18. Thou shalt not avenge.—*Forgive and forget*:—In another place we read, “For vengeance is Mine, and I will repay.” Wrest not God’s sword therefore out of His hand, sit not down in His seat, nor make thyself a god, for fear of the end. Well, let Him go then, I will not avenge, but sure I will remember Him; forgive I may, but never forget, &c. See what followeth in the very next words of this verse, “Neither shalt thou be mindful of a wrong against the children of thy people.” “Remembering,” then, you see, is condemned as well as “avenging,” and therefore it standeth you upon both to forgive and to forget, or else the Lord shall forget you out of His Book of Life. Nay, see more: all this is not yet enough, but we must “love also our neighbours, and that even as ourselves,” or else we perish. For, “I am the Lord,” saith the verse, that is, One that seeth and hateth and will smite thee in that strength that thou canst not resist nor endure. Foolish politic, think, then, of piety, and abhor that policy that devoureth piety and destroyeth thee. Thou canst not live ever, but must die, and come unto judgment. (*Bp. Babington.*) *Penalty of the desire to avenge*:—Small birds have an intense natural antipathy of nocturnal birds of prey. If one of these birds happens to be seen out of its lurking-place during the day they assail it vigorously, resent its intrusion, and avenge the oppression exercised over them during the night by combined attacks. This antipathy has been taken advantage of for the purpose of catching birds ever since the days of Aristotle. The catcher imitates, for instance, the voice of an owl about an hour before sunset, when the birds will flock together and perch on the trees or bushes in the suspected neighbourhood. The twigs, &c., having been previously covered with bird-lime, the birds pay their liberty and perhaps life as the penalty of their desire to avenge themselves on the owl. (*Scientific Illustrations.*) *Brotherly affection*:—Euclid showed in himself the true symptoms of brotherly affection, who, when his brother in his rage made a rash vow, saying, “Let me not live, if I be not revenged on my brother”; Euclid turns the speech contrary way, “Nay, let me not live, if I be not reconciled to my brother; let me not live, if we be not as good friends as ever we were before.” Shall a heathen thus outstrip us Christians? nature be stronger than grace? the bonds of flesh tie faster and surer than the bonds of grace? We call on God our Father, we acknowledge, or should do, one Church our mother, we are bred up in the same school of the Cross, fed at the same table of the Lord, incorporated into the same communion of saints. If these and the like considerations cannot knit our hearts in love one to another, the very heathens will rise up in judgment against us, and condemn us. (*J. Spencer.*) *Victory over self the best way to gain others*:—Winthrop, the Puritan Governor of Massachusetts, had a wonderful control of his own passions. On one occasion, one of the officers of the colony wrote him a “sharp letter,” complaining of his official acts. He sent back the letter—would not keep such a letter of provocation by him. By and by, the writer of the letter, while there was a scarcity of food in the colony, sent to buy some of Winthrop’s cattle. “Receive them,” said the governor, “as a

gift in token of my goodwill." The offender wrote back: "Sir, your overcoming of yourself hath overcome me." This way of dealing with offenders was loved by him.

Ver. 19. A garment mingled of linen and woollen.—*Unnatural commixtures*:—Most probably the reference is to different materials, interwoven in the yarn of which the dress was made; but a difficulty still remains in the fact that such admixture was ordered in the garments of the priests. Perhaps the best explanation is that of Josephus, that the law here was only intended for the laity; which, as no question of intrinsic morality was involved, might easily have been. But when we inquire as to the reason of these prohibitions, and especially of this last one, it must be confessed that it is hard for us now to speak with confidence. Most probable it appears that they were intended for an educational purpose, to cultivate in the mind of the people the sentiment of reverence for the order established in nature by God. For what the world calls the order of nature is really an order appointed by God, as the infinitely wise and perfect One; hence, as nature is thus a manifestation of God, the Hebrew was forbidden to seek to bring about that which is not according to nature, unnatural commixtures; and from this point of view, the last of the three precepts appears to be a symbolic reminder of the same duty, namely, reverence for the order of nature, as being an order determined by God. (*S. H. Kellogg, D.D.*) *Woollen and flaxen threads*:—Not only is it forbidden to weave woollen and flaxen threads together into one material to make wearing apparel of it; but, according to the administrators of the law during the second Temple, an Israelite must not mend a woollen garment with a flaxen thread, and *vice versâ*. One of the reasons which the ancient canonists assign for this prohibition is that "wool and linen were appointed for the priests alone." This law is observed by the orthodox Jews to this day. (*C. D. Ginsburg, LL.D.*)

Vers. 20-22. A bondmaid betrothed.—*Divine toleration of defective morality*:—It will be said, and truly, that by this law slavery and concubinage are to a certain extent recognised by the law; and upon this fact has been raised an objection bearing on the holiness of the lawgiver, and, by consequence, on the Divine origin and inspiration of the law. Is it conceivable that the holy God should have given a law for the regulation of two so evil institutions? The answer has been furnished us, in principle, by our Lord (*Matt. xix. 8*), in that which He said concerning the analogous case of the law of Moses touching divorce; which law, He tells us, although not according to the perfect ideal of right, was yet given "because of the hardness of men's hearts." That is, although it was not the best law ideally, it was the best practically, in view of the low moral tone of the people to whom it was given. Precisely so it was in this case. Abstractly, one might say that the case was in nothing different from the case of a free woman, mentioned *Deut. xxii. 23, 24*, for which death was the appointed punishment; but practically, in a community where slavery and concubinage were long-settled institutions, and the moral standard was still low, the cases were not parallel. A law which would carry with it the moral support of the people in the one case, and which it would thus be possible to carry into effect, would not be in like manner supported and carried into effect in the other; so that the result of greater strictness in theory would, in actual practice, be the removal thereby of all restriction on license. On the other hand, by thus appointing herein a penalty for both the guilty parties such as the public conscience would approve, God taught the Hebrews the fundamental lesson that a slave-girl is not regarded by God as a mere chattel; and that if, because of the hardness of their hearts, concubinage was tolerated for a time, still the slave-girl must not be treated as a thing, but as a person, and indiscriminate license could not be permitted. And thus, it is of greatest moment to observe, a principle was introduced into the legislation, which in its ultimate logical application would require and effect—as in due time it has—the total abolition of slavery wherever the authority of the living God is truly recognised. The principle of the Divine government which is here illustrated is one of exceeding practical importance as a model for us. We live in an age when, everywhere in Christendom, the cry is "Reform"; and there are many who think that if once it be proved that a thing is wrong, it follows by necessary consequence that the immediate and unqualified legal prohibition of that wrong, under such penalty as the wrong may deserve; is the only thing that any Christian man has a right to think of. And yet, according

to the principle illustrated in this legislation, this conclusion in such cases can by no means be taken for granted. That is not always the best law practically which is the best law abstractly. That law is the best which shall be most effective in diminishing a given evil, under the existing moral condition of the community; and it is often a matter of such exceeding difficulty to determine what legislation against admitted sins and evils may be the most productive of good in a community whose moral sense is dull concerning them, that it is not strange that the best men are often found to differ. Remembering this, we may well commend the duty of a more charitable judgment, in such cases, than one often hears from such radical reformers, who seem to imagine that in order to remove an evil all that is necessary is to pass a law at once and for ever prohibiting it; and who, therefore, hold up to obloquy all who doubt as to the wisdom and duty of so doing, as the enemies of truth and of righteousness. (*S. H. Kellogg, D.D.*)

Vers. 23-25. In the fourth year all the fruit thereof shall be holy.—*The law regarding fruit-trees*:—The explanation of this peculiar regulation is to be found in a special application of the principle which rules throughout the law—that the firstfruit shall always be consecrated unto God. But in this case the application of the principle is modified by the familiar fact that the fruit of a young tree, for the first few years of its bearing, is apt to be imperfect; it is not yet sufficiently grown to yield its best possible product. Because of this, in those years it could not be given to the Lord, for He must never be served with any but the best of everything; and thus until the fruit should reach its best, so as to be worthy of presentation of the Lord, the Israelite was meanwhile debarred from using it. During these three years the trees are said to be “as uncircumcised”; i.e., they were to be regarded as in a condition analogous to that of the child who has not yet been consecrated, by the act of circumcision, to the Lord. In the fourth year, however, the trees were regarded as having now so grown as to yield fruit in perfection; hence the principle of the consecration of the firstfruit now applies, and all the fourth year’s product is given to the Lord, as an offering of thankful praise to Him whose power in nature is the secret of all growth, fruitfulness, and increase. The moral teaching of this law is very plain. It teaches, as in all analogous cases, that God is always to be served before ourselves; and that not grudgingly, as if an irksome tax were to be paid to the Majesty of Heaven, but in the spirit of thanksgiving and praise to Him, as the Giver of “every good and perfect gift.” It further instructs us, in this particular instance, that the people of God are to recognise this as being true even of all those good things which come to us under the forms of products of nature. (*Ibid.*) *Early fruits*:—1. A merciful providence for posterity; for if a tree be suffered to bear too soon, as the first, second, or third year, it doth not usually endure long, but decayeth sooner than otherwise it would, the fruit draweth away the nourishment which should make the root and tree strong. 2. It restrained covetousness in the Jews, and taught them how God hateth scraping all to man’s self for his time, and nothing caring for posterity. Such are they that will take the heart out of the land before their term end, cut down the wood, fruit-trees, hedges, destroy the game, and do all the mischief they can and dare do. The Lord seeth them and thinketh of them, though they little think of themselves and of their malicious actions. 3. It shadowed how little worth the fruits of youth usually are, either to the Church or commonwealth, till years have bred strength of judgment, and made them both see and do what is profitable. Even as uncircumcised fruits, so are the actions of youth, and therefore David prayed for pardon in this case. (*Ep. Babington.*)

Ver. 27. Ye shall not round the corners of your heads.—That is, they are not to shave off the hair around the temples and behind the ears, so as to leave the head bald except a dish-like tuft upon the crown, thus imparting to their heads the form of a hemisphere. This was done by the Arabs, and other worshippers of the god Orotal. Hence the Arabs are ironically called “those with the corner of their hairpolled” (*Jer. ix. 26; xxv. 23; xlix. 32.*) (*C. D. Ginsburg, LL.D.*) *The true worshipper to appear as such*:—The command means, that the Israelite was not only to worship God alone, but he was not to adopt a fashion in dress which, because commonly associated with idolatry, might thus misrepresent his real position as a worshipper of the only living and true God. (*S. H. Kellogg, D.D.*) **Neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard.**—An injunction not to mar the beard might hardly appear necessary, since it is well known with what pride and scrupulous care the beard was cultivated by the

Hebrews and other Eastern nations; that it was deemed the greatest ornament of a man, a badge of his dignity, and a type of his vigour and perfect manhood; beard and life were hence often employed as synonymous, and oaths were confirmed, and blessings bestowed, by invoking the one or the other; suppliants, desirous to give the utmost solemnity to their appeals, touched the beards of those they addressed; and a mutilation of the beard was looked upon as an unbearable disgrace, and often regarded as more calamitous than death. In some countries the beard was the distinctive mark of free men. An old Spartan law forbade the ephori, from the moment of their taking office, to clip their beards; and those who had fled before the enemy in battle were compelled to appear in public with half-shorn beards. However, it was customary among several nations for young men "to present to their gods the firstlings of their beards"; and it was possibly to prevent the adoption of similar usages among the Hebrews that the injunction was deemed desirable. Besides, "marring the corners of the beard" was a heathen mode of mourning, which was not to be imitated, since it might easily lead to more objectionable perversities. (*M. M. Kalisch, Ph.D.*)

Ver. 28. Cuttings in your flesh for the dead.—The wild and frantic demonstrations of grief so common among eastern and southern nations, included cuts and incisions in the body, among the Hebrews, the Philistines, and the Moabites, the Arabs and Ethiopians, the Babylonians and Armenians; among the early Greeks and Romans, people in bereavement, especially women, indulged in the hideous practice of "lacerating their cheeks"; and when the king of the Scythians died, those of his subjects who received his body for burial, "cut off a part of their ears, shaved off their hair, wounded themselves on the arms, and drove arrows through their left hands." Such acts, which are still customary among some tribes of Persia, Arabia, and Abyssinia, were to be shunned by the Hebrews, not only because immoderate grief is unbecoming a nation of priests, but because cuts and incisions, usually made by persons while engaged in prayer or other religious exercises, were meant as substitutes for self immolation, and the blood thus shed was supposed to ensure atonement: such notions were held in abhorrence by the advanced Levitical writers, who attributed the power of expiation to the blood of clean sacrificial animals, but not to human blood. More widespread still was the custom of "inscribing" upon the body, by means of a "caustic," words or short maxims, or of marking the forehead and cheeks, the hands, the arms, and the neck, with figures and emblems. It prevailed, and partially still prevails, in many countries of the old and the new world, both among savage and more civilised nations; and though in many cases it is in itself harmless, being merely intended for ornament, or for identification, as when a slave bears the name or the initials of his master, or the soldier those of his general, it was, in many instances, a very efficient mode of strengthening the most dangerous superstitions. It was so common for idolaters to have the name or image of their chief deities, or some other significant symbol associated with their faith, engraved upon their bodies, that even the earlier religious legislators of the Hebrews deemed it necessary to devise some substitute for that custom in harmony with their new creed, and they introduced the "phylacteries," which the Hebrews were to "bind" as "a sign" upon their head, and as "a memorial" between their eyes, "that the law of the Lord might be in their mouths." Thus more than one advantage was gained; the sign or memorial was known to refer to none else but the One and true God of the Hebrews, and it was understood not as an amulet, which in itself is a shield against danger and misfortune, but as an emblem meant to remind the Israelite of his duties, and of their faithful accomplishment by his own zeal and vigilant exertion. Yet it was even after the exile considered unobjectionable to cover with such symbols the body itself, as is manifest from allusions of Isaiah (xliv. 5; xlix. 16). The Levitical writers prohibited, therefore, tattooing of any kind and for whatever purpose, well aware how imperceptibly that practice might lead again to the heathen rites and notions. Christians in some parts of the East, and European sailors, were long in the habit of marking, by means of punctures and a black dye, their arms and other members of the body with the sign of the crucifix, or the image of the Virgin; the Mohammedans mark them with the name of Allah, and Orientals generally with the outlines of celebrated towns and places. A traveller relates that, as a preparation for an Arabian wedding, the women tattoo the bride with figures of flowers, houses, cypresses, antelopes, and other animals. Among the Thracians tattooing was considered as a mark and privilege of noble birth. The branding of

prisoners and malefactors, extensively practised to this day, is included in the interdiction of our verse. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 30. **Ye shall keep My Sabbaths.**—*Sabbatic pause*:—Sabbath is a compound condition of the body and the soul. Misrepresentation of Sabbath, the forfeiture of its vitality, betrays itself in a negative conception of it, as restriction, deprivation, tax, and task. This allusion prevails at large, and prevails in two forms—religious cant and religious laxity, disrelish, or disdain. The latter is engendered in the former. Narrow natures, narrow Sabbath ideals; hard natures make them hard. They localise and dwarf the conception, as a measure of time, and a matter of law. The scope of the Sabbath is the happiness of man, the serenity of the race. It is intended to rescue the world from recklessness and ruin, from riot and from rot, from hardship, hazard, and over-haste. Sabbath is soul-rest. Its purpose is to train us to enjoy this earth in the light of everlasting life, and the glory of the gracious God, and not be slaves of time. The Sabbath is for the sanctity of peace, the satisfaction of the spiritual nature. It therefore takes the spirit away, not only from tasks and toils and trudges of its ordinary earth life, but from the worry and whirl of all the outer world. It persuades the soul to rest in God, as God rests on behalf of man; and to joy in His creation as He joyed, as His creation joys in Him. It begins by saying, You must, in order to say, You may. This silences the plea of lax indulgence which so many put up for spending a godless Sunday as the substitute of Sabbath. An uneasy Sunday is no Sabbath at all. They are restless and restive who press this very argument of recreation and of rest. Come, say they, Sunday is a holy day—a holiday. Now, to get as far from heaven as may be; now, to leave out God; now, let loose to enjoy nature, the fields, the forests, the ocean views. To enjoy the works of nature is the best way to keep the Sabbath holy, if you can call the Sabbath a delight. To take a walk, if you know how to walk with God. To rest, if you know how to rest in Christ. If you cannot read His glory in the page of nature, you are a child rustling a newspaper while yet it cannot read. That is dull enough. If you never get an ocean view, but such as the frolicking crowd get on the beach, or the chattering, giddy throng on the steamer's deck, puffing smoke against the sky and babbling—earth to earth, dust to dust, and ashes to ashes—to each other, or staring at the sea in sickly sentimentality, then the ocean takes no notice of you, and has not the pleasure of your acquaintance. If that is your fresh-air relaxation, and that your innocent diversion, and that your poetry of nature, and your ocean sublimity, you have never seen an ocean at all, and know not what it is, not knowing what it means, and nature's poetry to you is no more than negro minstrelsy, and the landscape yawns, and the skies wax dull, and instead of having a Sabbath delight, you find a blight, a burden, and a bondage. Sabbath, like music, is a treat to those alone who know how to enjoy it. The day of the Sabbath without the Sabbath of the day is gloomy to the last degree. There are Sabbatic thoughts privileged to take on the complexion of the heavens, as the stilled lake, the azure of the firmament. If you are enjoying a book or a picture, you need to take a time when other things shall not interfere. To intermingle is to mar. There is a beatific converse. If you are communing with a confidential friend, do you like to have anybody else talking in the room at the same time? What the third person says may be all well enough and wise enough, or important. But please do not interrupt, you say; I am very much engaged for this hour. Opportunities of heaven make appointments as reserved and entertain celestial visitants as well. There are rounded Sabbaths, different from Sunday fractions. Many count the day at large as somewhat sacred, but miss the mantling of the hours, the swell and climax. A wholeness is essential to the pleasure. You will not get a schoolboy or schoolgirl who has a half-holiday in the morning to go back to tasks and training in the after hours of the day. They say, Let us finish this. A little longer. And no one who has had a spiritual zest, a melody and beauty of celestial vision for the first portion of the day, will care to spend its latter half in listlessness or lower use. The people who worship by halves, by halves will serve their Maker through the week. If you can introduce upon this land the Continental Sabbath, you can introduce the Continental history upon this land. But the day is complete when the evening and the morning round it. There can be Sunday struggles, Sunday tasks, Sunday burdens, and there can be a Sabbath of the spirit. That is of God, the beauty of the Lord our God upon us. (*H. S. Carpenter.*) *Advantage of Sabbath keeping*:—Man! man! this is the great creator of wealth. The difference between the soil of Campania

and Spitzbergen is insignificant compared with the difference presented by two countries—the one inhabited by men full of moral and physical vigour, the other by beings plunged in an intellectual decrepitude. Hence it is that we are not impoverished, but on the contrary enriched by this seventh day, which we have for so many years devoted to rest. This day is not lost. While the machinery is stopped, while the car rests on the road, while the treasury is silent, while the smoke ceases to rise from the chimney of the factory, the nation enriches itself none the less than during the working days of the week. Man, the machine of all machines, the one by the side of which all the inventions of the Watts and the Arkwrights are as nothing, is recuperating and gaining strength so well, that on Monday he returns to his work with his mind clearer, with more courage for his work, and with renewed vigour. I will never believe that that which renders a people stronger, wiser, and better, can ever turn to its impoverishment. *Neglecting the Sabbath*:—Sir Francis Drake, though a curious searcher after the revolution of time, in three years sailing about the world, through the variations of several climates, lost one whole day, which was scarce considerable in so long a time. It is to be feared that there are many amongst us that lose a day in every week, one in seven, neglecting the Sabbath, nay every day in the week, not once thinking of God, or any goodness at all. (*J. Spencer.*)

Ver. 30. Reverence My sanctuary.—*Self-reverence*:—If you consider, you will find that there is scarcely a sin which does not concentrate into itself the venom of many sins. It is sinfulness against God, whose law it violates; against our neighbour, whom, directly or indirectly, it inevitably injures; against ourselves, whom it tends to destroy. But the reason why every sin has this threefold cord of iniquity is because the tabernacle of God is with men, so that in every act of sin we cannot but sin against Him by defiling His temple, against ourselves by desecrating the inner sanctuary of our own being, against others because they, too, are His living sanctuaries. When the great American orator, Daniel Webster, was asked what thought impressed him most by its awful solemnity, he answered at once, “The thought of my immediate accountability to God.” There is a form of this thought yet more impressive—to feel that God is with us and in us; that every sin against ourselves or our brother-man is also a sin committed in His very presence-chamber, and therefore also a sin committed directly against Him. In sinning against myself, I sin not against a mere handful of dust, a mere piece of clay, but against that which is majestic, eternal, and Divine, against the Holy Spirit, against the Lord Jesus my Saviour, against the eternal Lord of all my life. A living poet has said, “Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control, these three alone lead life to sovereign power.” It is most true. Self-reverence depends upon self-knowledge, and it leads to self-control; and these are the elements of the only true greatness of mankind. Now I wish to show how this high reverence for our being lifts men above temptation, and how the absence of it or unfaithfulness to it plunges them in vice and shame. For instance, self-reverence results in the preservation of innocence, of perfect childlike innocence in some men, the heart of childhood taken up and glorified in the powers of manhood, the young lamb’s heart amid the full-grown flocks. This is one of the loveliest, certainly one of the rarest, if not always the most instructive, forms of human character. Again, this self-reverence, even if it has failed to produce this absolute innocence which is the rarest thing in all the world, may yet lead to the repentance of an intense conviction. If it has not kept a soul from lying, for a moment at least, among the dust and potsherds of a sensuous life, it can yet uplift it from them and give it the wings of a dove. (*Archdeacon Farrar.*)

On reverencing the sanctuary:—I. HOW THE SANCTUARY IS TO BE REVERENCED. 1. The sanctuary is revered when proper ideas are entertained of its nature and holiness. This appropriate and sacred respect will be shown by not permitting the sanctuary to be dishonoured by any profane use of it, by keeping it in decent repair and cleanliness, and, as far as in us lies, in a state of magnificence worthy of the Great Being to whom it is dedicated; and by those outward tokens of reverence, by which we can express, without an idle superstition, our respect for the Being, the dwelling-places of whose honour are the temples devoted to His service. 2. After having proper ideas of the nature and holiness of the sanctuary, the next step towards reverencing it is to love to be in it, and to join in its services. When a place is consecrated to the worship of God; when He has promised to be there with a blessing; when He has proffered His word to be there as a fountain, set open for sin and uncleanness; and has appointed a priesthood to minister between Him and

His people; when the priesthood of Christ is there enjoyed after His ordinance; to be wholly absent, or but partially present, comports little with a reverence for the sanctuary. 3. It is essential to a reverence for the sanctuary that we strive not to bring thither our worldly thoughts and improper affections. 4. In order to discharge the duty enforced in the text, we must be attentive to decorum, when entering the sanctuary, while continuing in it, and when returning from it. II. THE FOUNDATION AND IMPORTANCE OF THE DUTY ENJOINED. This is briefly and fully assigned in the words, "I am the Lord." 1. If we consider the nature of the Being, to whom the sanctuary belongs, and whom we there meet, this is sufficient to fill us with awe. 2. The authority of the Lord, as our Sovereign, renders an obedience to His law indispensable. (*Bp. Dehon.*) *Reverence due to holy places*:—I. WHAT A SANCTUARY OF GOD IS, AND WHEREIN THE HOLINESS OF IT CONSISTS. Places are capable of a relative holiness in two respects. 1. In respect of a peculiar propriety God has in them by their dedication to His immediate worship and service. 2. In respect of His especial presence vouchsafed in them, and the particular communications of His grace in the holy offices there performed. II. WHAT RESPECT OR REVERENCE IS DUE TO SUCH HOLY PLACES. 1. The building, repairing, adorning, and furnishing such places for the service of God. 2. The keeping them from all profane and common usage, and applying them wholly to the worship of God, and the business of religion. 3. The duly frequenting the worship of God in these holy places (*Psa. xliii. 3; lxxiv. 2, 4.*) 4. Consider what reverence becomes us when we come into the House of God. Our business there is to exercise ourselves in holy and heavenly matters; and our demeanour in it ought to be such as may testify what awful thoughts we have of that glorious Majesty, before whom, in a particular manner, we present ourselves. (*John Leng, B.D.*) *The reverence due to God's sanctuary*:—The reverence we owe to public places of worship must be expressed—I. IN SOLEMNLY SEPARATING THEM FROM COMMON USE. Churches, when once consecrated, cannot be alienated from God's service without sacrilege, nor applied to any other use without profanation; for, as the Divine Majesty is holy, so it is manifestly a part of that honour we owe to God, that those things wherewith and whereby He is served should not be common and promiscuous, but reserved solely for sacred purposes. II. IN THE BEAUTIFYING AND ADORNING THEM. Shall the Almighty vouchsafe, in a peculiar manner, to take up His residence among us here on earth, and shall not we endeavour to provide the most honourable reception for Him? The bestowing proper ornaments upon God's house is not only an instance of respect due from us to Him, but is also a useful means of promoting religion; for outward objects will always affect the mind with impressions, according to the nature of them. III. BY A CONSTANT ATTENDANCE UPON THE SERVICES IN THEM. God, no doubt, is conscious to our most private devotions in our closets, to every ejaculation, to every pious thought that ever rises in our souls; He requires these, and approves of them; but then He expects, and commands also, that we pay Him public homage and external worship, wherein if we are deficient, we discharge but half our duty. IV. BY A DECENT AND DEVOUT BEHAVIOUR IN THEM. As earthly potentates have many palaces in several parts of their dominions, where at different times they keep their court, one whereof is generally erected in their principal city, superior in magnificence and grandeur to the rest: so the Almighty, the King of kings, has His several mansion-houses throughout the world, though His chief dwelling be in heaven, where He is encircled with beams of light and glory, too strong for mortals to approach. These mansion-houses in these lower realms are those places that are dedicated and consecrated to His service, in which He is ever present, ready to dispense liberally His favours to all that duly ask, surrounded with a guard of angels and archangels, who to us indeed are invisible, but we are not so to them. With what humility, with what reverence and devotion, then, ought we to carry ourselves, in a place so dreadful as is the house of God, and in the presence of such honourable, such awful company! (*S. Grigman, M.A.*) *Reverence at worship*:—There are some who, when they behave irreverently in church, think that, after all, it is only a matter that concerns themselves. That if they do not behave well, "that's," as they term it, "their own look-out." Of all the mistakes of which a man could be guilty, this is, I think, one of the greatest. Do you think that when you behave badly in church you will, at the day of account, only have that one sin of your own to answer for? Let me tell you this—that every sin of irreverence adds to you a mountain of sins for which you will have to give account at the Day of Judgment. Let me illustrate my meaning. You come to a service and behave badly. There are people, good people, sitting or kneeling around

you. They have come to church to worship, but they see your bad behaviour and are upset by it. They try to pray, but through your bad behaviour they cannot do so. They try to join in the service but find it almost impossible. It is a wasted service to them. They feel angry: it is a Sunday service gone for ever, never to be re-lived so far as that Sunday service is concerned, spoiled for them by you. Who will have to answer for that at the Day of Judgment? Not they, but you! (*E. Husband.*) *Man himself a sanctuary*:—St. Augustine gives the inmost meaning of this exhortation when he says, “Dost thou worship in a temple? Worship in thyself; be thou first a temple of the Lord.” *Our visits to the sanctuary should be frequent*:—We shall never see the glory of that light which dwells between the cherubim if our visits to the shrine are brief and interrupted, and the bulk of our time is spent outside the tabernacle amidst the glaring sand and the blazing sunshine. No short swallow-flights of soul will ever carry us to the serene height where God dwells. It is the eagle, with steady, unflinching flaps of his broad pinion, and open-eyed gaze upwards, that rises “close to the sun in lonely lands,” and leaves all the race of short-winged and weak-sighted twitterers far below. (*A. Mac-laren.*) *Worshipping together*:—Worshipping alone is like a solo in music, very beautiful and entrancing, with charms that no chorus can give. Worshipping together is like an anthem with its harmonies sung by a large chorus. There are powers in it and emotions awakened, which no solo, however beautifully sung, can produce. Christians who worship in the house of God in company with other Christians will receive blessings that they would not receive worshipping by themselves. *The sanctuary*:—The sanctuary should always be considered as the home of the people. It is in the sanctuary that human life should be interpreted in all the meaning of its pain and tragedy. Men should be able to say, “Now that we are baffled and perplexed by the things which are round about us in this world, and now that we find ourselves utterly unable to solve the problems which crowd upon our distracted minds, let us go unto the house of the Lord, for there we shall feel upon our souls the breath of eternity, and there we shall hear music which will quiet the tumult which carnal reason can neither explain nor control.” Dark will be the day when men can hear nothing in the sanctuary but words which they cannot understand, references which have no bearing upon immediate agony, and discussions which simply titillate the intellect and the fancy, but never reach the dark and mortal sorrows of the heart. (*J. Parker, D.D.*)

Ver. 31. *Them that have familiar spirits.*—*Prohibition of traffic with familiar spirits*:—This verse prohibits all inquiring of them that “have familiar spirits,” and of “wizards,” who pretend to make revelations through the help of supernatural powers. According to 1 Sam. xxviii. 7–11, and Isa. viii. 19, the “familiar spirit” is a supposed spirit of a dead man, from whom one professes to be able to give communications to the living. This pretended commerce with the spirits of the dead has been common enough in heathenism always, and it is not strange to find it mentioned here, when Israel was to be in so intimate relations with heathen peoples. But it is truly most extraordinary that in Christian lands, as especially in the United States of America, and that in the full light, religious and intellectual, of the last half of the nineteenth century, such a prohibition should be fully as pertinent as in Israel! For no words could more precisely describe the pretensions of the so-called modern spiritualism, which within the last half century has led away hundreds of thousands of deluded souls, and those, in many cases, not from the ignorant and degraded, but from circles which boast of more than average culture and intellectual enlightenment. And inasmuch as experience sadly shows that even those who profess to be disciples of Christ are in danger of being led away by our modern wizards and traffickers with familiar spirits, it is by no means unnecessary to observe that there is not the slightest reason to believe that this which was rigidly forbidden by God in the fifteenth century B.C., can now be well-pleasing to Him in the nineteenth century A.D. And those who have most carefully watched the moral developments of this latter-day delusion will most appreciate the added phrase which speaks of this as “defiling” a man. (*S. H. Kellogg, D.D.*)

Ver. 32. *Rise up before the hoary head.*—*Homage for age*:—1. Because the aged represent mature wisdom. 2. Because the aged record long years spent in our service. 3. Because the aged demonstrate God’s providential care. 4. Because the aged are solemn admonitions of life’s decay. 5. Because the aged suggest nearness

to eternity. 6. Because the aged exhibit the richest fruits of grace. 7. Because the aged mark the line of God's covenant blessings for descendants. 8. Because the aged represent on earth Him who is the "Ancient of Days." (1) Youth should venerate the aged (Job xxx. i. 12; Isa. iii. 4, 5). (2) Age should influence and hallow the young (2 Tim. i. 5). (*W. H. Jellie.*) *Reverence the aged* :—When you meet them in public places, or they come to where you are, show them reverence. Infirmary, wisdom, nay, age in itself, have each a claim on us. Age, apart from its qualities, has in it solemnity. The Lord would thus solemnise us in the midst of our pursuits. "Lo! the shadow of eternity! for one cometh who is almost in eternity already. His head and beard white as snow, indicate his speedy appearance before the Ancient of Days, the hair of whose head is as pure wool." Every object, too, that is feeble seems to be recommended to our care by God; for these are types of the condition wherein He finds us when His grace comes to save. It is, therefore, exhibiting His grace in a shadow, when the helpless are relieved, "the fatherless find mercy" (Hos. xiv. 3), "the orphans relieved, and the widow" (Psa. cxlvi. 9), and the "stranger preserved." (*A. A. Bonar.*) *Reverence for superiors* :—The institutions of Sparta have everywhere been praised for the encouragement which they gave to the duty of showing respect for the aged, but the language of the Jewish lawgiver is much more emphatic: "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man." Beautiful examples are recorded in the Bible, as patterns for our imitation, in this important particular of filial reverence and obedience. The behaviour of Isaac towards Abraham, and that of Jacob to both father and mother; Joseph's deference to his aged father, even when he himself was surrounded by the splendours of the Egyptian Court; Ruth with her mother-in-law; Solomon in the grandeur of royalty, paying respect to his mother; and, more than all, our blessed Saviour's tender care for His mother in the hour of His dying agonies—all afford suggestive lessons to us. It is, however, not merely concerning reverence to parents that the text would lead us to speak. The very appearance of age is calculated to soften our hearts and to call forth our respect. No snow falls lighter than that which sprinkles the head in advancing years; and yet none is really heavier, because it never melts. Vale and mountain-top are covered alike with the white flakes which winter scatters broadcast and with unstinted hand, but the cheerful sun will soon cause them to disappear. There is no returning spring whose genial warmth can penetrate the eternal frost of age. The decrepitude of age can claim neither enterprise nor courage. "He is afraid of that which is high, and fears are in the way," and with the load of infirmities which press him down, the additional weight of a "grass-hopper" would be burdensome. "Desire has failed," and ambition can no longer tempt him to put forth ventures and submit to toil. Only one wish remains to be fulfilled—to depart from this weary life. With this vivid picture before him, who can help feeling a sympathy for the old? It must be confessed that the present generation are sadly unmindful of the lesson taught us in the Catechism, "To submit myself to all my governors, teachers, spiritual pastors, and masters; to order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters." "Betters," indeed! Verily, the young people of this age have no "betters"! Some years ago Governor Everett, of Massachusetts, was riding out of Boston in a sleigh, with another gentleman of high social position, when they approached a school-house, from which a score of noisy boys rushed forth to enjoy their afternoon's recess. The governor said to his friend, "Let us observe whether these lads show the marks of politeness to us which we were taught to practise fifty years ago." At the same time he expressed his fears that the habits of civility were not much thought of in later times. As the sleigh passed the school-house all doubt on the subject was instantly dispelled, for the rude lads did their best at pelting the dignitaries with snowballs as they drove rapidly along the way. Every right-minded person must acknowledge that such conduct was outrageous and inexcusable. We ought, however, to go behind this astonishing act of boorish rudeness, and remember what long-continued neglect of proper instruction and training, on the part of parents and teachers, had suffered such a shocking state of manners to grow up in a civilised land. There never was anything quite equal to the presumption of the young or the meekness and acquiescence of the old in this matter. A shrewd observer remarked, not long ago, to a friend, "If, as you are going down town, you should approach a dozen boys playing on the sidewalk, so that no room was left for you to pass, which would you do? would you say, 'Boys, you must not block up the walk in this way!' or would you get down into the muddy street and go round?"

The prompt answer was, "Go round, of course!" This reply shows the shameful pass to which things have come. Men of mature years must abdicate all rights, and truckle under with cowardly submission, lest they provoke the ill-will of boys! Parents and teachers! it is your bounden duty to correct this evil, cost what it may. The "Church Catechism" must again be made what it was in past generations, when the young showed respect to their "betters," a text-book in our families and schools. I trust that the young persons who hear me will not only be convinced by what has just been said of the imperative duty of honouring their parents, but that the kindred obligation of showing respect to old age will be much more thought of and observed. If your lives are spared, it will not be many years before you will be old yourselves, and you will need the sympathy and consideration which I am now recommending you to practise. The rules of ordinary politeness would require you to attend to this matter, but the duty rests on much higher ground. It is God Himself who gives the command, "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man." (*J. N. Norton, D.D.*)

Reverence due to age:—This is one of those duties which are derived from the instinctive feelings of the heart. The old man was honoured before the reasonableness of the obligation was considered or the benefit of it understood. From that sensibility with which the Almighty Father has impressed the human soul, men often feel before they think, and act before they have considered their motives of action. From the same source many of the most refined pleasures of life originate. Ask the contemplative man why he delights to view the fragments of antiquity—the hanging arch, the mutilated column, the moss-grown tower! Ask him why he sometimes watches the closing twilight, wanders through the gloomy valley, or listens with peculiar pleasure to the distant murmur of the sea! He will find it difficult, perhaps, to account for his sensations, to analyse his satisfactions, or to trace them to their cause; but he will tell you that he felt and enjoyed them before he knew why or considered wherefore. In the same manner those who can contemplate the hoary head without some prepossession of respect and tenderness want the essential requisite of nature for performing their duty to the aged as they ought. But if they wish to discover other motives, such may be found in abundance. It is to the pious aged that the young are to look for superior knowledge and conspicuous virtue. They have enjoyed the benefits of experience, and are therefore qualified to act as monitors and guides. They may be considered, too, as oracles, who speak to the serious and well-disposed with overwhelming authority. They have encountered the temptations and difficulties which yet await their younger brethren, and can point out to others the way by which they escaped. They, probably, have been exposed to trials from which our fortitude would shrink in terror, and have mortified those evil dispositions of nature which might be preparing for us disappointments, misery, and guilt. To render our veneration more personal and endearing we should consider them, also, as dead to those pleasures and enjoyments which we regard as our chief felicity, and labouring with those infirmities under which we must one day sink. Besides, therefore, the precepts of religion and the arguments of reason, there are other motives arising from sensibility and the humane affections of the heart, which render it an indispensable duty in the young to reverence the old.

On the relative duties of the young to the aged:—Let us consider the motives for honouring "the hoary head," as they are deprived from the principles and connected with the duties of Christianity. But we must remember it is not merely to age that this reverence is due, but to the hoary head only "when it is found in the way of righteousness." From its very nature this must be one of the relative duties of the young, and its obligations are founded on the genuine sentiments of the heart, on the deductions of reason, as well as the precepts of religion, and on the peculiar advantages resulting from it. The gospel of Christ strongly inculcates the principles of general deference and humility. "In lowliness of mind," says the apostle, "let each esteem other better than himself," and to the exhortation of being "kindly affectioned towards our fellow-creatures," is added the precept of "preferring one another in honour." The young, considered in their relation to the aged, have many additional reasons for showing this deference and honour; and farther, the sentiments of reverence should be accompanied with tenderness and affection. It is to them that the young are to look for superior knowledge, and, in general, superior virtue. They have enjoyed the benefits of experience, as well as reflection, and are therefore qualified to be our monitors and guides. The claims to deference arising from the distinctions of birth and fortune, when compared to these, are trifling and inconsiderable. If reverence be due from

one human being to another it can never be offered with more propriety than as the price of knowledge from the ignorant to the wise. The aged may be considered, in this respect, as oracles that speak to the serious and the well-disposed with such conviction as they can nowhere find but in their own experience. They are a sort of living chronicles, that impress the memory and imagination with all the energy of truth. Let us consider them as having husbanded and improved the talent well, which we perhaps shall squander away, and as preparing, with humble confidence, to "enter into the joy of their Lord." But let me observe that these observations relate only to "the hoary head," when crowned with wisdom, virtue, and piety. Viewed in this light, the aged cannot but impress us with the deepest sense of reverence and honour. They have encountered difficulties and temptations, in which we perhaps shall be enthralled, and can point out to us the means by which they escaped. They have been exposed to trials from which our fortitude would shrink with terror, and have mortified those evil dispositions of nature which might be preparing for us disappointment, misery, and guilt. To the hero who has retired from the field, crowned with the wreath of fame, men look up with admiration and applause; and shall we withhold our reverence from Him who has fought the good fight of "Christian faith," and obtained a victory over the temptations of the world? But as every human being is subject to sin, we should be careful, in all the examples that are set before us, to avoid the evil and to imitate the good. In short, let us joyfully embrace every means in our power of improving that inestimable talent which is entrusted to our care, and by which alone we can "grow wise unto salvation." (*J. Hewlett, B.D.*) *Old age*:—The eye of age looks meek into my heart; the voice of age echoes mournfully through it; the hoary head and palsied hand of age plead irresistibly for its sympathies. I venerate old age; and I love not the man who can look without emotion upon the sunset of life, when the dusk of evening begins to gather over the watery eye, and the shadows of twilight grow broader and deeper upon the understanding. (*Longfellow.*) *Respect for the aged*:—One day (Cicero tells the story in his treatise on "Old Age,") an aged Athenian came into the theatre, but not one of his fellow-citizens in that immense crowd would incommode himself to make room for him. As, however, he approached the ambassadors from Lacedæmon, who had their own special seat, they all rose to receive him into their midst. The whole assembly burst into applause, whereupon somebody said, "The Athenians know what is good, but they will not practise it." Many people know what is right but turn a deaf ear to conscience, and neglect their duty, although it has been made clear to them what that duty is. (*S. S. Chronicle.*) *Reverence of old age*:—God hath put a signal honour upon it by styling Himself the "Ancient of Days," and He threatens it as a great judgment upon a people (Isa. iii. 5), that the children shall behave themselves proudly against the ancients. A reverent awe before them is not only a point of manners, but a part of a moral and express duty; and therefore it is said of Elihu (Job xxxii. 4), that he waited till Job had spoken because he was elder than he, and in ver. 6 he saith, "I am young and ye are very old: wherefore I was afraid and durst not show you mine opinion." (*Bp. E. Hopkins.*)

Vers. 33, 34. **The stranger . . . shall be . . . as one born among you.—Strangers befriended**:—I. THE DANGER APPREHENDED. The fear was lest they should grow too inclusive and haughty, and begin to despise and oppress the individual foreigners that should remain in the land or might enter it for a settlement. The invitation to the stranger might be like that of the spider to the fly—a siren's voice luring to destruction. This is the very fate that has befallen the Jews in mediæval and modern Europe. To prevent such usage the command of the text was issued. There arises a clashing of commercial interests; to see foreigners flourishing in the midst whilst home interests suffer, has often led to riot and persecution. II. THE PRINCIPLES ON WHICH THE COMMAND OF THE TEXT IS BASED. 1. There is a recognition of the brotherhood of man. "He shall be unto you as one born among you." This doctrine of the unity of the race was brought eminently to light by Jesus Christ. 2. There is a recognition of the royal law of love, both as to its extent and as an instrument of obedience. For (1) love is not to be centred in self, nor (2) is the class of neighbours to be restricted, and (3) to love the stranger is seen to be the only security against inequitable dealing—three important truths. Without affection, the strictest rules are in vain. To guide the ship by its helm is easier than by any external attachment of ropes. Better is it for a man to be impelled towards the goal by inward desire than to be pushed and dragged by the hands of others, tugging him now on

this side, now on that. 3. It is instructive to discern in the law predictions of the gospel. Here are the germs that developed into trees laden with richest fruit. III. THE MEMORIES BY WHICH OBSERVANCE OF THE COMMAND IS ENFORCED. 1. By a remembrance of their own condition in former days. Christians! your time of bondage should make you compassionate to those still in darkness. Will you shun them as evil, or let praying and working on their behalf go hand in hand? 2. By a remembrance of their relationship to God. After nearly every precept comes this solemn reminder, "I am the Lord thy God." He was the covenant God to whom the Israelites had dedicated themselves, being sprinkled with sacrificial blood. If they entertained a proper sense of the authority of God, they would attend to this particular statute. Stand on the monument, and it is difficult to tell which is the giant and which the dwarf below in the streets. So before the majesty of God all earthly distinctions of race disappear. Love the stranger! God hath made all of one blood. (S. R. Aldridge, B.A.) *Courtesy to strangers*:—I. WE OURSELVES ARE STRANGERS ON THE EARTH. "For ye were strangers in the land" (ver. 34). 1. Dependent on other care than our own; human and Divine. 2. Transient, soon to leave, resting but a little while on earth. Observe: it is good to see in the case of others an analogy with our own; it will foster sympathy and helpfulness. II. COURTESY SHOULD ROOT ITSELF IN GENEROUS LOVE. "Thou shalt love him as thyself." 1. Acting to the stranger as if the service were being rendered to us. This will teach us what to do, and how to show kindness. 2. Recognising that we may perchance be in the stranger's position. As thus needing kindness, let us now exhibit it. 3. Opening our hearts in ungrudging benevolence. "Love" gives lavishly. Courtesy should not be meagre and superficial. III. GRATITUDE TO HEAVEN PROMPTS US TO GENEROUS KINDNESS. "Ye were strangers in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God." 1. Memory of God's rescue should constrain us to care for others. 2. God's relationship to us requires that we illustrate His lovingkindness. 3. His commands to courtesy cannot be evaded with impunity. (W. H. Jellie.) *Unkindness to a stranger*:—Philip of Macedon, hearing of one in his kingdom that refused most unthankfully to receive a stranger, of whom he had been formerly succoured in a time of extreme need, as having lost all he had by a wreck at sea, caused him to be worthily punished, by brauding in his forehead these two letters I. H., i.e., *Ingratus Hospes*, The Unthankful Guest. Now, if every unthankful man were thus used, there would be many a blistered forehead amongst us. Oh the unthankfulness that we show unto God, who, when we were strangers to Him, shipwrecked even in an ocean of sin, sent His Son Christ Jesus to deliver us, yet we refuse to receive Him, to relieve Him in His distressed members, and to be obedient to His blessed commands! And then our ingratitude to one another is such that though we come off with smooth fronts here in this world, yet such characters of shame and confusion are engraven on our souls that men and angels shall read them with amazement when the books shall be laid open (Dan. vii. 10). (J. Spencer.)

Vers. 35, 36. Just balances, just weights, . . . shall ye have.—*Business honesty*:—I. SOCIAL LIFE IS BASED UPON COMMERCIAL CONTRACTS. Each bringing to the other some product of skill or toil. We cannot supply a fraction of our own wants, we must buy; and we have also in turn something to sell. Business is the outcome of this reciprocal dependence. Each *can*, each *must* help the other, or social and civic life would be impossible. II. DISHONESTY IS SUBVERSIVE OF THE VERY BASIS OF SOCIAL LIFE. It breaks confidence, alienates intercourse; closes friendly relationships, substitutes roguery for righteousness, and wrecks all goodwill. Pleasant to reflect—1. How much trade honour there is among men. 2. How surely trickery brings discovery, and therefore penalty, on rogues. 3. How honesty is ever winning respect and reward. III. JUSTICE SITS OBSERVANT OF ALL DECEITFUL DEEDS. "I am the Lord." He sees all secretcies; weighs all balances; hates all dishonesties; will requite all deceits. (W. H. Jellie.) *Honesty in small things*:—A young American aspirant for office in the State of Iowa drove up to an hotel, alighted, and engaged a room. He desired his trunk to be taken to his room, and, seeing a man passing whom he supposed to be the porter, he imperiously ordered him to take it up. The porter charged him twenty-five cents, which he paid with a marked quarter worth only twenty cents. He then said, "You know Governor Grimes?" "Oh, yes, sir." "Well, take my card to him, and tell him I wish an interview at his earliest convenience." "I am Governor Grimes, at your service, sir." "You—I—that is, my dear sir, I beg—a—a thousand pardons!" "None needed at all, sir," replied

Governor Grimes. "I was rather favourably impressed with your letter, and had thought you well suited for the office specified; but, sir, any man who would swindle a working man out of a paltry five cents would defraud the public treasury had he an opportunity. Good evening, sir." *An unfair judgment*:—A judge in New Orleans has recently set aside a jury verdict on somewhat unusual but certainly good grounds. A man was on trial for murder. After the case had been given to the jury they retired for consultation for verdict, and spent the hours in drinking whiskey and playing cards. They found the prisoner guilty; but the next day, in setting aside their verdict, Judge Baker said: "Twelve men, supplied with a quart bottle of whiskey and a deck of cards, who played poker from twelve o'clock at night till four in the morning, and holding a man's life in their hands, could not possibly give the prisoner a fair trial. As long as I preside over this court I cannot sanction such a thing, and therefore I grant the prisoner a new trial." (*S. S. Chronicle*.)

Righteous dealing:—Rev. John Miller, writing in the New York *Independent* the reminiscence of an interview with the late A. T. Stewart, the millionaire storekeeper of New York, tells us that on one occasion in reply to his visitor's question, "What is the secret of this enormous business?" Mr. Stewart replied: "The only secret I know is that I started with the idea of becoming professionally and actually a merchant. I saw lawyers and doctors become rich by making themselves precious to those they worked for. Hence certain rules. I had only 'one price.' Ladies who come in their cushioned carriages don't want to be fevered by the idea of beating down. Again, perfect goods! I bought and sold nothing damaged. And in a third of a century people got to buying of me with the luxury of an easy mind. I allowed no deceit. A youth who would misrepresent anything I would discharge. I forbade ladies to be allowed to deceive each other in talking of my goods, and salesmen were ordered to correct buyers who were standing by the goods, who said they would wash, for example, if they would not. You have no idea what comfort this would give in shopping through a long course of years and the business would grow, under this entire freedom from complaint, in a way that neither the storekeeper nor the buyer at the time might quite remark or understand. This is my secret," said he, "as far as I can conceive. I have demanded full profits, but then I have bought with uniform care, and sold correctly and with absolute truth all my time." "Poor humanity may have only one good side," adds Mr. Miller, "but, certainly, that is worthy of a record." *Honesty in common dealing*:—The idea running through this passage is manifestly that of an inward, solid, living truthfulness of mind, as opposed to all surface-virtue or sham, or to any mere keeping up of appearances or putting on of an outside for the avoiding of scandal or damage or disrepute. It is that of a heart entire and direct with itself: a heart without any doubleness or intricacy or prevarication; a heart that keeps itself clean of the dust and cobwebs that gather in the darkness of close designs, oblique arts, and snaky thoughts; and that rejoices to have its chambers all open, its passages clear, and full of light, and fresh and sweet with Heaven's own breath. (*Norman Hudson*.)

Just dealings:—In whatever we do or say let us by all means be faithful and true: deceiving no man; beguiling no man to his damage; punctual to our word and promise; firm and constant to our just engagements; honest and fair in all our dealings. Last, not least, let us be sure that we not only propose to ourselves good and laudable ends but that we also pursue them by no means but what are just and pure; remembering that—

"Him, only him, the shield of Heaven defends
Whose means are fair and spotless as his ends."

Trade immoralities:—A popular pastor preached once on the immoralities of trade. At the close of the service two of the prominent members of his church, both successful business men, came to him. Said the first: "Dominie, there is no use in preaching such a sermon. That sort of thing is never practised by honourable houses or by such men as compose this congregation." The other called the preacher aside and said, "Dominie, there is no use in preaching such sermons. The practices you speak of are so universal that they have ceased to merit your characterisation of them. Every business house in this city does just that thing, my own amongst the rest. It is not worth while to preach against it." (*Honi. Review*.) *Everyday religion*:—It is not Israel alone which has needed, and still needs, to hear iterated this command, for the sin is found in every people, even in every city, one might say in every town, in Christendom; and—we have to say it—

often with men who make a certain profession of regard for religion. All such, however religious in certain ways, have special need to remember that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord"; and that holiness is now exactly what it was when the Levitical law was given out. As, on the one side, it is inspired by reverence and fear toward God, so, on the other hand, it requires love to the neighbour as to one's self, and such conduct as that will secure. It is of no account, therefore, to keep the Sabbath—in a way—and reverence—outwardly—the sanctuary, and then on the week-day water milk, adulterate medicines, sugars, and other foods, slip the yard-stick in measuring, tip the balance in weighing, and buy with one weight or measure and sell with another, "water" stocks and gamble in "margins," as the manner of many is. God hates, and even honest atheists despise, religion of this kind. Strange notions, truly, of religion have men who have not yet discovered that it has to do with just such commonplace, everyday matters as these, and have never yet understood how certain it is that a religion which is only used on Sundays has no holiness in it; and therefore, when the day comes, as it is coming, that shall try every man's work as by fire, it will, in the fierce heat of Jehovah's judgment, be shrivelled into ashes as a spider's web in a flame, and the man and his work shall perish together. (*S. H. Kellogg, D.D.*) *Commercial justice in other nations*:—The Hindoo law imposes the highest fines not only upon those who falsify scales or measures, but upon official examiners of coins who pronounce a good piece bad or a bad piece good; it inflicts heavy penalties, and partially corporeal chastisement, upon those who overreach customers, give short measure or light weight, adulterate goods, or try to give them a deceptive appearance; and with respect to a trader in counterfeited gold, it enacts that "by order of the king he must be cut in pieces with razors," or that "he must at least lose three limbs of his body and pay the highest fine." In Egypt, false coiners and the manufacturers of false weights were condemned to have both their hands cut off; and fraudulent practices of this kind were held in equal detestation by other nations, and were visited with similar punishments. (*M. M. Kalisch, Ph.D.*)

CHAPTER XX.

VERS. 2-27. He shall surely be put to death.—*Penal sanctions*:—This chapter, directly or indirectly, casts no little light on some most fundamental and practical questions regarding the administration of justice in dealing with criminals. We may learn here what, in the mind of the King of kings, is the primary object of the punishment of criminals against society. First and foremost is the satisfaction of outraged justice, and of the regal majesty of the supreme and holy God; the vindication of the holiness of the Most High against that wickedness of men which would set at nought the Holy One and overturn that moral order which He has established. Again and again the crime itself is given as the reason for the penalty, inasmuch as by such iniquity in the midst of Israel the holy sanctuary of God among them was profaned. But if this is set forth as the fundamental reason for the infliction of the punishment, it is not represented as the only object. If, as regards the criminal himself, the punishment is a satisfaction and expiation to justice for his crime, on the other hand, as regards the people, the punishment is intended for their moral good and purification (see ver. 14). Both of these principles are of such a nature that they must be of perpetual validity. The government or legislative power that loses sight of either of them is certain to go wrong, and the people will be sure, sooner or later, to suffer in morals by the error. In the light we have now, it is easy to see what are the principles according to which, in various cases, the punishments were measured out. Evidently, in the first place, the penalty was determined, even as equity demands, by the intrinsic heinousness of the crime. A second consideration, which evidently had place, was the danger involved in each crime to the moral and spiritual well-being of the community; and, we may add, in the third place, the degree to which the people were likely to be exposed to the contagion of certain crimes prevalent in the nations immediately about them. As regards the crimes specified, the criminal law of modern Christendom does not inflict the penalty of death in a single possible case here mentioned; and, to the mind of many, the contrasted severity of the Mosaic code

presents a grave difficulty. And yet, if one believes, on the authority of the teaching of Christ, that the theocratic government of Israel is not a fable, but a historic fact, although he may still have much difficulty in recognising the righteousness of this code, he will be slow on this account either to renounce his faith in the Divine authority of this chapter or to impugn the justice of the holy King of Israel in charging Him with undue severity, and will rather patiently await some other solution of the problem than the denial of the essential equity of these laws. But there are several considerations which, for many, will greatly lessen, if they do not wholly remove, the difficulty which the case presents. In the first place, as regards the punishment of idolatry with death, we have to remember that, from a theocratic point of view, idolatry was essentially high treason, the most formal repudiation possible of the supreme authority of Israel's King. If, even in our modern states, the gravity of the issues involved in high treason has led men to believe that death is not too severe a penalty for an offence aimed directly at the subversion of governmental order, how much more must this be admitted when the government is not of fallible man, but of the most holy and infallible God? And when, besides this, we recall the atrocious cruelties and revolting impurities which were inseparably associated with that idolatry, we shall have still less difficulty in seeing that it was just that the worshipper of Molech should die. And as decreeing the penalty of death for sorcery and similar practices, it is probable that the reason for this is to be found in the close connection of these with the prevailing idolatry. But it is in regard to crimes against the integrity and purity of the family that we find the most impressive contrast between this penal code and those of modern times. Although, unhappily, adultery and, less commonly, incest, and even, rarely, the unnatural crimes mentioned in this chapter, are not unknown in modern Christendom, yet, while the law of Moses punished all these with death, modern law treats them with comparative leniency, or even refuses to regard some forms of these offences as crimes. What then? Shall we hasten to the conclusion that we have advanced on Moses? that this law was certainly unjust in its severity? or is it possible that modern law is at fault in that it has fallen below those standards of righteousness which rule in the kingdom of God? One would think that by any man who believes in the Divine origin of the theocracy only one answer could be given. Assuredly, one cannot suppose that God judged of a crime with undue severity; and if not, is not then Christendom, as it were, summoned by this penal code of the theocracy—after making all due allowance for different conditions of society—to revise its estimate of the moral gravity of these and other offences? We do well to heed this fact, that not merely unnatural crimes, such as sodomy, bestiality, and the grosser forms of incest, but adultery, is by God ranked in the same category as murder. Is it strange? For what are crimes of this kind but assaults on the very being of the family? Where there is incest or adultery we may truly say the family is murdered; what murder is to the individual, that, precisely, are crimes of this class to the family. In the theocratic code these were, therefore, made punishable with death; and, we venture to believe, with abundant reason. Is it likely that God was too severe? or must we not rather fear that man, ever lenient to prevailing sins, in our day has become falsely and unmercifully merciful, kind with a most perilous and unholy kindness? Still harder will it be for most of us to understand why the death-penalty should have been also affixed to cursing or smiting a father or a mother, an extreme form of rebellion against parental authority. We must, no doubt, bear in mind, as in all these cases, that a rough people, like those just emancipated slaves, required a severity of dealing which with finer natures would not be needed; and also, that the fact of Israel's call to be a priestly nation bearing salvation to mankind, made every disobedience among them the graver crime, as tending to so disastrous issues, not for Israel alone, but for the whole race of man which Israel was appointed to bless. On an analogous principle we justify military authority in shooting the sentry found asleep at his post. Still, while allowing for all this, one can hardly escape the inference that in the sight of God rebellion against parents must be a more serious offence than many in our time have been wont to imagine. And the more that we consider how truly basal to the order of government and of society is both sexual purity and the maintenance of a spirit of reverence and subordination to parents, the easier we shall find it to recognise the fact that if in this penal code there is doubtless great severity, it is yet the severity of governmental wisdom and true paternal kindness on the part of the high King of Israel, who governed that nation with intent, above all, that they might become, in the highest sense, "a holy nation" in the midst of an ungodly world, and so

become the vehicle of blessing to others. And God thus judged that it was better that sinning individuals should die without mercy than that family government and family purity should perish, and Israel, instead of being a blessing to the nations, should sink with them into the mire of universal moral corruption. And it is well to observe that this law, if severe, was most equitable and impartial in its application. We have here, in no instance, torture; the scourging which in one case is enjoined is limited elsewhere to the forty stripes save one. Neither have we discrimination against any class or either sex; nothing like that detestable injustice of modern society which turns the fallen woman into the street with pious scorn, while it often receives the betrayer and even the adulterer—in most cases the more guilty of the two—into “the best society.” Nothing have we here, again, which could justify by example the insistence of many, through a perverted humanity, when a murderess is sentenced for her crime to the scaffold, her sex should purchase a partial immunity from the penalty of crime. The Levitical law is as impartial as its Author; even if death be the penalty the guilty one must die, whether man or woman. (*S. H. Kellogg, D.D.*)

Stone him with stones.—Lapidation:—Lapidation, as is well known, was frequently resorted to by excited mobs for the exercise of summary justice or revenge. But as a legal punishment it was not usual in the ancient world; it is only mentioned as a Macedonian and a Spanish custom, and as having been occasionally employed by the Romans. Among the Hebrews, however, it was very common; it was counted as the first and severest of the four modes of inflicting capital punishment—the three others being burning, beheading, and strangling—and it was in the Pentateuch ordained for a variety of offences, especially those associated with idolatry and incest; in certain cases it was even inflicted upon animals; and its application was by the Rabbins considerably extended. As regards the proceedings observed, the Bible contains no hints except the statements that it took place without the precincts of the town, and that the men by whose testimony the criminal had been convicted were obliged to throw the first stones. But the Mishnah gives the following account, some features of which are possibly of remoter antiquity: When the offender is being led away to the place of execution, an official remains at the door of the law-court, while a man on horseback is stationed at some distance, but so that the former can see him wave a handkerchief, which he does when any one comes declaring that he has something to say in favour of the condemned; in this case the horseman at once hastens to stop the procession; if the convicted himself maintains that he can offer proofs of his innocence or extenuating circumstances, he is taken back before the tribunals; and this may be repeated four or five times, if there appears to be the least foundation for his assertions. A herald precedes him all the while, exclaiming, “So-and-so is being led out to be stoned to death for this and this offence, and so-and-so are the witnesses; whosoever has to say anything that might save him let him come forward and say it.” Having arrived about ten yards from the appointed spot, he is publicly called upon to confess his sins; for “whosoever confesses his sins has a share in the future life”; if he is too illiterate to confess, he is ordered to say, “Let my death be the expiation for all my sins.” At four yards from the place he is partially stripped of his garments. When the procession has at last reached its destination, he is conducted upon a scaffolding, the height of which is that of two men, and after drinking “wine mingled with myrrh,” to render him less sensible to pain, he is by one of the witnesses pushed down, so that he falls upon his back; if he is not killed by the fall the other witness throws a stone upon his breast; and if he is still alive all the people present cover him with stones. When the corpse, which is usually nailed to the cross, is in a state of decomposition, the bones are collected and burnt in a separate place; then his relatives pay visits to the judges and the witnesses, in order to prove that they bear them no hatred, and that they acknowledge the justice of the sentence; and they must show their grief by no external mark of mourning. (*M. M. Kalisch, Ph.D.*)

Ver. 26. Ye shall be holy unto Me: for I the Lord am holy.—Holiness enforced:—I. Let us endeavour to explain the meaning, and the force of that reason for which HOLINESS is so UNIVERSALLY ENJOINED. “Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy.” And so God’s holiness is made the motive for ours. And why? The Lord our God is holy; therefore should we labour to become so likewise, in order that we may become like Him in the most lovely and glorious of His attributes. We should labour to become like Him in the most lovely and glorious of His attributes in order that by so doing we may become well-pleasing in His

sight; and, by becoming well-pleasing in His sight, to attain to that eternal happiness which God hath prepared for all those who, because they are like Him, He will condescend to love. II. Having seen why the holiness of God is proposed to us as the motive to become holy, let us proceed to examine into THE NATURE OF THAT HOLINESS WHICH WE ARE COMMANDED TO IMITATE, THAT WE MAY HAVE A MODEL OF THAT WHICH WE ARE TO PURSUE. 1. First of all, then, we are taught that God is a Spirit. As the heavens, therefore, are higher than the earth, so also must we place our conceptions of what constitutes the essential holiness of the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, above the pollution of every earthly passion. Therefore in knowing, in the first place, what is the model of that holiness of God which you are to pursue, you must first of all remember that no earthly pleasure, no carnal imagination must have a place within the sanctuary of the heart. The utter banishment of all these lusts, then, both from our minds (lest they be defiled), and from our actions (lest they become unholy), must be the first of our labours, must be our perpetual care. 2. But God is not holy in Himself alone, He is holy also in His acts towards every creature in His power. And herein we have another point on which we are to labour after the similitude to God's holiness; we must throw aside every regard towards the persons of men, which courts the lofty, which rejects and despises the lowly man; we must account the welfare of all an object of our care; we must consider none too mean to be helped by our hand—none too high to mete out to them things which are expedient and their due. We must think of all, we must feel for all, we must be just to all; and so to show forth the similitude of God's holiness to all. 3. Thus holy in Himself, and holy in His acts, God is holy, in the third place, in the manner in which He regards both sin and the sinner. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil; and the wicked, though he be exalted, shall not stand in His sight, for He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. To turn, then, away our eyes, lest we look upon vanity, and to separate ourselves from all commerce with ungodly men—to give no encouragement to transgression, nor to the transgressor—to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather to reprove them, both in word and deed—these are the duties to which in imitation of God's holiness this third particular would more particularly direct us. III. BUT WHO IS SUFFICIENT FOR THESE THINGS? Imperfectly as we have delineated the holiness of the Lord, few as are the features which we have had time to detail, yet who can consider his own failings in life without confessing how feebly he has attained to the conformity of the Almighty's holiness? When the text is taken in itself, as the measure of the duty required of all, and when we compare it with our weak and wavering performances, there is nothing left for man but destruction and despair. But the same God, who hates every unholy person and thing, has made a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it. Christ has fulfilled the law of holiness for man; and He who knew no sin, has been made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. This is at once the apparently great mystery, and this the consolation of our religion. (*C. Benson.*) *Ye shall be holy* :—There are three ways in which we may take these words. First, as simply the statement of a fact; the Lord, speaking in prophecy, says you shall be holy; you cannot help being holy, for you belong to God. He has chosen you. Thus every saved one becomes dedicated; and whatever is dedicated is "holy"; and, therefore, you being dedicated, you must be "holy." Another interpretation might be (still prophetically), "You shall be holy." The Lord God Omnipotent shall see to that. But then the promise bears upon that word "your." "Your God." If He is really your God, the God you have chosen, the God you have loved, the God you have served, the God really in your heart, your God, then He will take care and make you holy. But though both these interpretations of the verse are admissible, and true, and comforting, I think it is evident that they are not the meaning which is chiefly intended. "Shall" is not meant to be a future tense, but the imperative mood. It is very frequent in the Bible; a strong imperative, a positive law to be holy. "Ye shall be holy," and for this reason above all others, "because the Lord your God is holy." The creature must be like his Creator; the child must be like his Father; the scholar must be like his Master; the sinner must be like his Saviour. "Ye shall be holy." It is your first duty to be "holy." The reasons why we should be "holy" are very many. We are made capable of holiness. That is a great fact. Our former convictions and feelings point us to holiness. We have to do with "holy" things. Everything that we see, and everything we touch is "holy." God has provided a way by which we may be "holy." Holiness, even in this world, is the highest happiness, and we are made fit for and trained for

a holy world beyond—a holy eternity. But besides and above all this our best and highest reason for anything is always what we find in God Himself. "Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy." It was God's primary principle at man's creation. "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness." Therefore God made man "holy." And when man lost his holiness, God, being very jealous about it, immediately proceeded to provide a way by which we could recover it. But what is holiness? The Greek word for "holiness" is compounded of two words which mean "without earth," free from earthliness. Or we may take holiness to be that which has God for its Author, and God for its end; or that which matches with God, and is fitted for His service and His glory. Or sanctified purity. Or, as we have seen, that which resembles God, and is dedicated to His service and His glory. A reflection of Himself, or one or other of His attributes. A reflection of His holiness. Now the great and all-important question is, How is "holiness" to be attained? How do we, who are so very far off from holiness, become holy? In its great outline, I should say the answer is this: First, you must be, and realise that you are, a member of Christ; a Christian. Made so by your baptism, and your membership ratified and confirmed by the solemn words and vows which you yourself have made, and the many inward feelings in your own heart, and the many communications which you have had with God from time to time. Being, then, a member of Christ, and Christ your Head, the Holy Spirit, which was poured upon you at baptism, must hold His true place in your heart. The great work lies all within the Trinity. The Father gives you to the Son, the Son gives you to the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost gives you back to the Son changed and sanctified. Sanctified, but still a poor sinner. And the Son cleanses you with His blood, and clothes you with His own righteousness, and gives you back to the Father, through Him and in Him holy, holy enough for heaven, holy enough to stand in God's holy presence. (*Jas. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Holiness* :—I. THE

HOLINESS OF SAINTS DEPENDS UPON NO OUTWARD CONDITION, REQUIRES NO SPECIAL GIFT OF NATURE OR OF PROVIDENCE, OF UNDERSTANDING OR WISDOM, NAY, I MAY SAY, OF GRACE. It need not be shown in any one form; it does not require the largeness of any one grace; still less does it consist in austere sadness, or stern constraint, or rigid severity as to ourselves or others, except as to our sins. The blessed company of the redeemed saints have and have not found one road to heaven. One road they found, in that they were saved through one Redeemer, looking on to Him and believing in Him before He came or looking to Him when He had come. But all else in their outward lot was different. They were "redeemed to God out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation." II. HOLINESS WAS MADE FOR ALL. It is the end for which we were made, for which we were redeemed, for which God the Holy Ghost is sent down and shed abroad in the hearts that will receive Him. God did not will to create us as perfect. He willed that we, through His grace, should become perfect. But what He willed that we should be, that, if our will fail not, we must become. His almighty will vouchsafes to depend on ours. What God commands; what God wills; what God so willed that He made us for this alone, that we should be holy, and being holy, should share His holiness and bliss—that must be within our reach if we will. III. THE MISTAKE OF MISTAKES IS TO THINK THAT HOLINESS CONSISTS IN GREAT OR EXTRAORDINARY THINGS, BEYOND THE REACH OF ORDINARY MEN. It has been well said, "Holiness does not consist in doing uncommon things, but in doing common things uncommonly well." Few can ever do great things, and the few who can do them can each do but few. But every one can study the will of God, and can give great diligence to know it and to do what he knows. Your daily round of duty is your daily path to come nearer unto God. (*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*) *Godly distinctiveness* :—I. A UNIQUE CODE OF MORAL AND SACRED LAWS. "Ye shall keep all My statutes and all My judgments, and do them" (ver. 22). No other people had a standard of morals, or a directory of religious regulations comparable to these. II. A STUDIOUS AVOIDANCE OF THE CUSTOMS OF UNGODLINESS. "Ye shall not walk in the manners of the nations," &c. (ver. 23). Conformity to the world was prohibited. However sanctioned, or desirable, or seemingly harmless, the customs of the ungodly were to be shunned. III. A CAUTIOUS SELECTION OF SOCIAL ENJOYMENTS AND INDULGENCES. "Ye shall put difference between clean and unclean," &c. (ver. 25). Palate not to be gratified, tables not to be spread with promiscuous viands. God's wish and word were to rule them in every enjoyment, and self-restraint was to mark them in every gratification. IV. A HERITAGE OF SPECIAL PRIVILEGES AS GOD'S PEOPLE. "Ye shall inherit their land, a land that floweth with milk and honey," &c. (ver. 24). Sinners lose earthly

felicities, as the penalty of their impiety: "therefore I abhorred them" (ver. 23). The godly possess rich heritage of good as the mark of God's favour: "I will give it unto you to possess" (ver. 24). V. A SEAL OF DIVINE SANCTITY RESTING UPON THEM. They show themselves to be—1. Divinely "separated" (ver. 24), from other people. Their history and career attest God's dealing with them as with no other people. 2. Divinely sanctified. "Ye shall be holy unto Me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people" (ver. 26). For the very "beauty of the Lord" rests upon the character and conduct of those He redeems. Note: (1) God claims His people: they are not their own; may not follow their own desires and delights; He is their law, they must surrender to Him. "That ye should be Mine" (ver. 26). It is a blessed fact to belong to God: but it carries its obligations. (2) Privileges are conditioned upon fidelity (ver. 22). The inheritance would be forfeited if obedience were withheld. All God's covenant promises to us wait upon our loyalty to Him. "Ye are My friends if ye do," &c. (*W. H. Jellie*.) *A holy God requires a holy people*:—The various laws which the Jews received from God through the medium of Moses were all meant to promote social, personal, political, national morality; to keep the people distinct from infecting elements around them, separated and hedged off from the possibility of contagion; so that whatever defiled them might be seen not to come from others, but to rise from the depths of their own fallen and depraved hearts. "Therefore I have separated you from all people, that ye might be unto Me," He says, "a peculiar people"; and the great end that He contemplated constantly was their holiness—that they might be a holy people. The word "holy," in fact, means properly, separated—set apart to some purpose or object or end. But in order to make their holiness still more likely He presented ever before them a grand model. "Be ye holy," is His constant phrase, "for I the Lord am holy." "Ye shall be holy unto Me: for I the Lord am holy." It is well known that a people become, to a great extent, what their god or their gods are. The gods of the heathen were most of them monsters of lust. Jupiter was depraved; Mercury was a thief; others of their gods were infected with the greatest crimes; as if their villainy upon earth gave them a title to a niche in the Pantheon of heathenism. You must expect, from such gods in the theology of a people, bad lives in the history of that people. If the model be so bad, how low must the imitator and the worshipper be! But before the Jews there was placed the magnificent ideal of all that was holy, pure, just, perfect. The nearer they approached God, the nobler they became; the farther they receded from Him, the more degenerate they became. They had the standard infinitely remote, but infinitely perfect, ceaseless approximation to which was their nation's strength, its glory, and its happiness. Thus the Jews were selected that they might be holy. They had a model constantly before them they were to imitate, that they might be holy. And they were chosen for this grand destiny not because of their own virtues—for, strange enough, their very mercies the corruption of their hearts turned into their own merits, and the more God favoured them, with a perverse ingenuity the most remarkable, when we know it was so often rebuked, the more credit they took to themselves; and He tells them that He chose them, not because they were greater or more excellent than any other nation, but because, in His own sovereignty, He set His love upon them. Thus they were hedged round with ceremonial laws; they had presented before them a perfect, infinitely perfect, Model; they were selected by distinguishing grace in order to reach and strive after this great destiny; they had ringing in their ears every day the law, "Thou shalt love," which is translated into practical language, "Thou shalt be holy," in order that they might obtain the end for which they were chosen and blessed and favoured—to be a separated people and a holy people to the Lord. Now, what the Jews were meant to be nationally we Christians are meant to be personally. We, too, are selected and favoured for this purpose; and we shall find all the economy of the New Testament constantly contemplating the holiness of God's people as the great end and object and aim of our Christian privileges and blessings and mercies upon earth. I. But, first of all, LET US DEFINE WHAT HOLINESS IS. The word means simply separation. So the Latin word *sacer*, from which comes our word "sacred," is employed to denote profane as well as sacred—means wicked as well as holy. Hence the expression "*Auri sacra fames*," literally translated, "The sacred thirst of gold," but strictly and properly, "The accursed thirst of gold." The meaning, therefore, of a holy person is one severed or separated to something; and when applied to that which is pure and just and true it means separated to God. And we can only form an idea of what holiness is by seeing it defined by God, as embodied in His character and explained at length

in His Word. Holiness in a Christian is just separation, sanctification, severance from the excessive love of things lawful, from the forbidden love of things sinful, to the growing love of what God has commanded in His holy Word, and of the grand image that God has depicted in every page of His revelation. II. Now having seen what this holiness is, let me state, in the next place, HOW CHRISTIANS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT ARE CONSTANTLY ASSOCIATED WITH IT. 1. They are elected to it. He has chosen us in Christ from the foundation of the world, that we should be holy. 2. Now, this holiness, in the next place, is true and lasting beauty; it is real and original beauty. The King's daughter has all her beauty within, that needs a spiritual eye to discriminate and discern. The mass of mankind can only see glare, pretension, gaudiness, but the true Christian sees a city where the world sees none, for Christ, when He came to His own, His own received Him not; there was no beauty in Him that the world should desire Him. 3. And this holiness, too, of character is the highest possible honour. It is the livery of Heaven; it is the very robes of the King of glory; it is the dress which He prepares for His own; it is the Apocalyptic garments "white and clean, which are the righteousness of saints"; it is the raiment white and clean which no moth can gnaw, which no rust can decay, which no thief can break through and steal. 4. And, in the next place, this holiness is fitness for heaven. A man without an ear cannot enjoy music. In the same manner, a person without a sanctified heart, without holiness, is not fit for heaven. 5. In the next place, it is the distinguishing mark of the true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is this that makes a Christian; and without this he cannot see God or put forth any valid claim to be a Christian at all. 6. In the next place, the Holy Spirit is the Author of this holiness. III. Thus we have seen what this holiness is and who is the Author of it; let me notice now THAT ALL THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE GOSPEL ARE MEANT TO PROMOTE IT. Preaching is meant to promote it; sacraments are meant to promote it; the reading of the Bible is meant to promote it; the teaching of teachers is meant to promote it; all our schools and institutions, our preaching and hearing, our praying and communicating, are all helps that, by the blessing of the Spirit of God, bring us nearer to Him who is the Fountain of all holiness, of all light, and of all life. IV. And in the next place, ALL THE CHASTISEMENTS OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE ARE MEANT TO PROMOTE THIS. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *Holiness* :—Holiness! There is sweet music in the very name. It tells of sin subdued, of boisterous passions lulled, of fiery lusts becalmed, of miry paths made clean. It sets before us a pure walk, where peace and joy go hand in hand, and scatter heaven-born fragrance round. Holiness! To cause this lovely plant to thrive, its roots to deepen, and its branches to bear fruit, is one grand purport of the scheme of grace. The Lord's own voice proclaims, "Ye shall be holy: for I am holy." Holiness falls short when it falls short of God. But perhaps you say such glorious lustre is too bright for sight. The heavenly sunshine dims the dazzled eye. But still draw near. God's Holiness, in human form, has visited and trod our earth. Jesus takes flesh and tabernacles here. His walk in our soiled paths is clean as on celestial pavement. Mark every act. Hear every word. They have one feature, holiness. Mark next the soil in which this flower has roots, the seed from which it springs. Man's pride must here lie low. It never thrives in Nature's field. Neither can hand of Nature plant it. When sin came in each gracious fibre died. The curse fell blighting on earth, but most so on the human heart. The thorns and briars of the outward world are dismal emblems of the wilderness within. God's likeness was effaced at once, and hideous enmity established its one rule. How, then, can holiness revive? Until the waste becomes a garden the plant cannot be set; until Heaven gives the seed it can nowhere be found. God must prepare the soil. God must infuse the seed. The work is wholly God's. Next mark the renovating means. The wondrous engine is the gospel truth. The Spirit wins by charming notes. He opens ears to hear new melody. He gives the eye to see new scenes. He reveals Christ, the beauty of all beauty. He shows the cleansing blood, the sympathetic heart, the perfect refuge, the all-sufficient aid. These sights wave a transforming wand. A new affection subjugates the man. Jesus and purer hopes now occupy the mind. Darkness is passed. The true light shines. The grace of faith springs up. This is the chain which binds the soul to Christ and makes the Saviour and the sinner one. A channel is now formed by which Christ's fulness plentifully flows down. The barren branch becomes a portion of the fruitful stem. Christ's vital juices permeate the whole. The limbs receive close union with the head, and one life reigns throughout the total frame. (*Dean Law.*) *Example of holiness* :—Christ is the Pattern, the Sample, the exemplary Cause of

our sanctification. Holiness in us is the copy or transcript of the holiness that is in the Lord Jesus. As the wax hath line for line from the seal, the child limb for limb, feature for feature, from the father, so is holiness in us from Christ. (*M. Henry.*) *Influence of holiness* :—There is an energy of moral suasion in a good man's life passing the highest efforts of the orator's genius. The seen but silent beauty of holiness speaks more eloquently of God and duty than the tongues of men and angels. Let parents remember this. The best inheritance a parent can bequeath to a child is a virtuous example, a legacy of hallowed remembrances and associations. The beauty of holiness beaming through the life of a loved relative or friend is more effectual to strengthen such as do stand in Virtue's ways and raise up those who are bowed down than precept, command, entreaty, or warning. Christianity itself, I believe, owes by far the greater part of its moral power, not to the precepts or parables of Christ, but to His own character. The beauty of that holiness which is enshrined in the four brief biographies of the Man of Nazareth has done more, and will do more, to regenerate the world and bring on everlasting righteousness than all the other agencies put together. It has done more to spread His religion in the world than all that has ever been preached or written on the evidences of Christianity. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *Sanctification, what it is* :—The saintly and learned Archbishop Ussher was frequently urged by a friend to write his thoughts on sanctification, which at length he engaged to do; but a considerable time elapsing, the performance of his promise was importunately claimed. The Archbishop replied, "I have not written, and yet I cannot charge myself with a breach of promise, for I began to write; but when I came to treat of the new creature which God formeth by His own Spirit in every regenerate soul I found so little of it wrought in myself that I could speak of it only as parrots, or by rote, but without the knowledge of what I might have expressed, and therefore I durst not presume to proceed any further upon it." Upon this his friend stood amazed to hear such a confession from so grave, holy, and eminent a person. The Archbishop then added: "I must tell you we do not well understand what sanctification and the new creature are. It is no less than for a man to be brought to an entire resignation of his own will to the will of God, and to live in the offering up of his soul continually in the flames of love, as a whole burnt-offering to Christ; and oh! how many who profess Christianity are unacquainted experimentally with this work upon their souls!" *Holiness defined* :—At one of the ragged schools in Ireland a clergyman asked the question, "What is holiness?" A poor Irish convert in tattered rags jumped up and said, "Please, your Reverence, it's being clean inside." *True holiness* :—True holiness is a plain and an even thing, without falsehood, guile, perverseness of spirit, deceitfulness of heart, or starting aside. It hath one end, one rule, one way, one heart; whereas hypocrites are, in the Scripture, called "double-minded men," because they pretend to God and follow the world; and "crooked men," like the swelling of a wall whose parts are not perpendicular nor level to their foundation. Now rectitude, sincerity, and singleness of heart are ever, both in the eyes of God and man, beautiful things. (*H. G. Salter.*) *The ideal Holy One* :—And have you never cried in your hearts with longing, almost with impatience, "Surely, surely there is an ideal Holy One somewhere, or else how could have arisen in my mind the conception, however faint, of an ideal holiness? But where? oh, where? Not in the world around, strewn with unholiness. Not in myself, unholy, too, without and within, and calling myself sometimes the very worst of all the bad company I meet, because that company is the only company from which I cannot escape. Oh! is there a Holy One whom I may contemplate with utter delight? and if so, where is He? Oh! that I might behold, if but for a moment, His perfect beauty, even though, as in the fable of Semele of old, the lightning of his glances were death." (*Charles Kingsley.*) *The Mount of Holiness* :—In elocution there is what rhetoricians term a "second voice." It comes after an orator has been speaking sufficiently long for his lungs to become thoroughly warmed. The diversified ligaments and muscles and membranes which compose or influence his vocal organs then take on a more perfectly adjusted action, and the voice grows flexible and full and rich, able to express "thoughts that breathe and words that burn." There is a vision known to opticians as "second sight." In their later years many people come into possession of this. They can lay aside their spectacles, worn perhaps for a quarter of a century, and with the naked eye read the finest print. I have seen octogenarians whose eyesight was apparently as good as in the palmiest days of their youth. There is a mental perception enjoyed by multitudes of thinkers which seems to them like a "second intellectuality." It is broader,

clearer, and more satisfying than was the first. It is reached after a night-time of doubt and darkness, during which one's theories seem like chaos and one's beliefs like desperate guesses. It comes after a transition period, when, like Noah's ark, the mind can find no Ararat on which to anchor. Then breaks in a new light; the shadows flee, the heterogeneous mass of speculations begin to crystallise; a form appears, and he who had well-nigh become Diogenes the Cynic begins to develop into Socrates the Philosopher. So there is a "second religious experience," deeper than the first. It lies beyond the surf of unbelief and partial consecration, and is reached by launching out into the deep of an unreserved dedication to God. Many have attained unto it and enjoy "the rest of faith." Others are hungering after this more perfect righteousness, and will not hunger long in vain. Multitudes more are wishing for but making no determined efforts to secure it. They are like travellers ascending the valley of Chamounix, who catch glimpses of Mont Blanc, and though longing to stand on its glittering summit, have no expectation of ever doing so. I recall a memorable Sunday afternoon when, from an hotel window in Geneva, seventy miles distant, I caught my first view of that celebrated landmark. The setting sun was transmuting, as no other alchemist ever could, its whole immense top into one gorgeous mass of burnished gold, and the desire to visit it came upon me like a spell. But the city of Geneva, with its bright stores and historic church and marvellous watch factories, its bridges across the crystal river, and its romantic lake, lay at my feet, and I lingered; and when at last I sought the shining mount, like most tourists I was satisfied to reach its base and gaze upon it from below. So it is with thousands of Christians. Before their raptured vision rises, in their best moments, the Mount of Holiness. They sigh for its lofty experiences, but still view it from afar, or journey no farther than its foot-hills. Would they but climb its rising footways and scale its magnificent peaks, a second and deeper experience would be theirs. (*Sunday School Record.*)

CHAPTER XXI.

VERS. 1-24. **Speak unto the priests the sons of Aaron.**—*Sacred relationship demands sanctity of life:*—If there is one fact more notably emphasised than another in this address to priests, it is this: their—I. ABSOLUTE AND INDESTRUCTIBLE RELATIONSHIP. Every son of Aaron was a "priest." Of this union with Aaron it is observable that—1. It results from a living relationship. By birth he was connected with Aaron, a lineal descendant of God's high priest. And no truth is more a truism than that every Christian is by birth-relationship connected with Christ—the moment he is quickened and becomes a believing and a living soul, he is a "priest unto God." By no process of spiritual development or self-culture or studied effort does the convert to Christ become a "priest"; he is that by virtue of his living relationship to the High Priest: for as all the sons of Aaron were priests, so are all the sons of God through their connection with Christ. 2. The relationship is inalienable and indestructible. Conduct is not the basis of relationship with Christ, but life. A son of Aaron may be defiled "for the dead" (ver. 2), yet he did not thereby cease to be related to Aaron. If we were only priests to God as our conduct was faultless, who could stand? We are all unclean; defile ourselves continuously with "the dead," the guilty and contaminating things of earth. But "our life is hid with Christ in God"; and by virtue of that life-union we remain priests. 3. Imperfections of nature and character do not sever relationship. A "blemish," deformity of body, prove a disqualification for ministry, but did not destroy association with Aaron. Yes; there is exclusion from high and honoured services in consequence of irremediable defect and fault; and Christians with incurable weakness of disposition, worldliness of sympathy, infirmities of character, vacillation of purpose, are thereby set aside from honour in the Church and highest ministries for their Lord; yet still the relationship to Christ continues, for it is a birth-relationship, based upon a life-union with Jesus. But though relationship is absolute and indestructible—II. PRIVILEGE IS DEPENDENT AND CONDITIONAL. 1. Defilement is a disqualification for near fellowship and highest enjoyment of the priestly relationship. Contact with "the dead" was forbidden; it excluded the priest from the service of God until cleansed anew and so reinstated. All contami-

nation works disqualification, therefore "touch not, taste not, handle not." A priestly life should be pure. 2. Defect is a disqualification for highest service for our Lord. (1) Physical deformities even now form a natural barrier to the loftiest offices in the Church of Christ. Not unfitting the sufferer for many lowlier and less public ministries; for sacred grace is not dependent upon physical "form and comeliness." (2) Defects of character, of mental and moral constitution, also exclude from loftiest stations and services in the Christian kingdom. They are a barrier to such positions in the Church as require noblest qualities of character: for eminence gives influence; and he who moves in the public gaze must be free from such weaknesses of will, or principle, or conduct as would lay him open to inconstancy. (*W. H. Jellie.*) **Holy unto their God.—Holy priests:—I. THE HONOURABLE POSITION OF THE PRIESTS.** 1. They are sanctioned by God, consecrated to His especial service, they bear His stamp upon them, wear His livery, and receive of the honour that belongs to Him. 2. They perform the high function of offering the bread of God. This phrase included not only the placing of the shewbread in the sanctuary, but also the presentation to God of the various sacrifices which become the materials for His glory and praise. The enlarged priesthood of the New Testament, embracing the whole body of believers in Christ Jesus, are similarly dedicated to sacred office. They present spiritual sacrifices, they "show forth the excellences of Him who called them out of darkness into His marvellous light." **II. HONOUR INVOLVES OBLIGATION AND RESTRICTION.** Many acts permissible to the people were not so to the priests. They were evidently to be models of holiness in their persons, families, and social relationships. Men like the idea of occupying posts of dignity, but do not sufficiently realise the responsibilities thence accruing. We are always more anxious to get than to give; sinecure livings are at too high a premium of estimation. **III. PERFECT HOLINESS IMPLIES BEAUTY, LIFE, AND JOY.** It is in opposition to disfigurement, death, and sorrow. How different this conception of holiness from that of gloom and moroseness which many entertain. Let young people know that God loves pretty children, and handsome men and women, when the glory of the Spirit is thus reflected in the outer person; He delights in the vigour and innocent mirth of the young, and in the happy enthusiasm, the lively rejoicing of their elders, when these are the outcome of righteousness and devoted service. The imperfection of this present state is evident in the fact that holiness does not mean exemption from anxiety and tribulation. It sometimes appears as if the most faithful children of God were visited with heaviest chastisements. We are assured of a future state where these contradictions shall be removed. The ideal shall not only be approximated, but attained to; "death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying, nor pain any more: the first things are passed away," symbolical and ascriptional righteousness shall give place to real perfect holiness; in the presence of God there shall be fulness of joy. (*S. R. Aldridge, B.A.*) **Personal requirements of the priests:—**It is a truth which ought ever to be before the minds of those who minister in holy things, and deeply graven on their hearts, that righteousness of life and consistency in private conduct is the most vital element of a preacher's power. Let his ordination, his talents, his attainments, his eloquence, be what they may, without a life corresponding to his teachings he is only "as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." Actions speak louder than words. Character is more eloquent than rhetoric. What a man is always has more weight than what he says. And in the same proportion that an unholy life weakens a minister's influence, does uprightness, fidelity, and consistency, enhance it. A truly honest and good man, whatever his sphere, will always have weight. However people may revile his profession, they always feel rebuked in his presence, and pay homage to him in their secret souls. There is might in virtue. It tells upon a man in spite of him. It strikes at once into the heart and conscience. And when a minister has a pure and spotless life to sustain his profession, he becomes a host in strength. Jehovah says of His priests, "They shall be holy unto their God, and not profane the name of their God." "He that ruleth among men must be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord." But the law prescribes for the domestic relations and social surroundings of the priest as well as for his personal perfections. Upon this point also it becomes a minister to be particular. **I. The ancient priest was required to be physically perfect.** Otherwise he could not be a fit representative of that perfect humanity which was found in our Saviour. He was required to be without bodily blemish, that Israel might know what sort of a Priest Messiah to expect. Their eyes were to be directed to Jesus as one "altogether lovely." **II. The ancient priest was required to be properly and purely mated.** As a type of Christ in all

other respects, so was he also in his espousals. The Lamb is not alone. He has His affianced bride—His holy Church. He hath chosen her as a chaste virgin—as one whom “the daughters saw and blessed.” Not a divorced woman—not a vile offender—not an unclean thing—is the Church of Jesus. And the priest’s wife had to be pure to typify these pure espousals of the Lamb, and the excellencies of that Church which He has chosen for His everlasting bride. III. It was required of the ancient priest THAT HIS CHILDREN SHOULD BE PURE. The transgression of his daughter degraded him from his place. It is one of the demands laid upon Christian pastors to have “faithful children that are not accused of riot, nor unruly.” The reason is obvious. A minister’s family, as well as himself, is made conspicuous by the very nature of his office. Their misdeeds are specially noticed by the world, and readily laid to his charge. Any unholiness in them operates as a profanation of his name. It is so much taken from his power. The Holy Ghost therefore calls upon him to “rule well his own house, having his children in subjection.” But the law was typical. It relates to Christ and His Church. It points to the fact that everything proceeding from His union with His people is good and pure. IV. There are other requirements which were made of the ancient priests, both in the twenty-first and twenty-second chapters, which I will sum up under the general name of HOLINESS. They were not to defile themselves with the dead, or by eating improper food, or by contact with the unclean, or by irreverence towards the holy things. They were to be very particular about all the laws, and to devote themselves to their office as men anointed of God. In one word, they were to be holy; that is, whole, entire, complete, fully separated from all forbidden, and fully consecrated to what was commanded. This was necessary for personal and official reasons; but especially for the high priest as a type of Christ. It was a requirement to shadow forth the character of Jesus, and the sublime wholeness and consecration which were in Him. Men have despised and desecrated the sanctity of everything else related to religion; but when they came to the character of Jesus, their hands grew powerless, their hearts failed, their utterance choked, and they turned aside in reverent awe of a goodness and majesty which could not be gainsaid. Infidelity itself has freely and eloquently confessed to His matchless excellence. Paine disavows “the most distant disrespect to the moral character of Jesus Christ.” Rousseau is struck with admiration at His excellence. “What sweetness, what purity in His manner! What an affecting gracefulness in His delivery! What sublimity in His maxims! What profound wisdom in His discourses! What presence of mind, what subtlety, what truth in His replies! How great the command of His passions! Where is the man, where the philosopher, who could so live, and so die, without weakness and without ostentation? . . . Yea, if Socrates lived and died like a sage, Jesus lived and died like a God.” What would man be without Christ—without His holy life? In Him, and in Him alone, earth rises into communion with heaven, and light shines in upon our benighted humanity. V. There is yet one particular in the requirements concerning the ancient priests to which I will refer. It is said of the high priest, “HE SHALL NOT UNCOVER,” &c. (chap. xxi. 10–12). That is to say, he was not to allow any natural sympathies to interfere with the pure and proper discharge of the duties of his high office. Some have regarded this as a coldness and harshness thrown around the old priesthood, which has nothing to correspond to it in the Christian system. I do not so understand it. The very reverse is the truth. The high priest was a great religious officer for the entire Jewish nation. He belonged more to the nation than to his family or himself. It would therefore have been a most heartless thing to allow a little natural domestic sympathy and affection to set aside all the great interests of the Hebrew people. So far from throwing a chilliness around the high priesthood, it gave to it a warmth and zeal of devotion, and showed an outbreathing of heart upon the spiritual wants of the congregation, superior to the love of father or mother. And it was meant to shadow forth a precious truth: viz., that Christ, as our High Priest, consecrated all His highest, warmest, and fullest sympathies in His office. He loved father and mother, and was properly obedient to them; but when it came to the great duties of His mission, the interests of a perishing world were resting upon His doings, and He could not stop to gratify domestic sympathies. Rising then above the narrow circle of carnal relationships, “He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, Behold My mother and My brethren!” His sympathies are those of the spirit, and not of the flesh. (J. A. Seiss, D.D.) Any blemish.—*Blemishes affect service, not sonship*:—To be a child of God is one thing; to be in the enjoyment of priestly communion and priestly

worship is quite another. This latter is, alas! interfered with by many things. Circumstances and associations are allowed to act upon us by their defiling influence. We are not to suppose that all Christians enjoy the same elevation of walk, the same intimacy of fellowship, the same felt nearness to Christ. Alas! alas! they do not. Many of us have to mourn over our spiritual defects. There is lameness of walk, defective vision, stunted growth; or we allow ourselves to be defiled by contact with evil, and to be weakened and hindered by unhallowed associations. In a word, as the sons of Aaron, though being priests by birth, were, nevertheless, deprived of many privileges through ceremonial defilement and physical defects; so we, though being priests unto God by spiritual birth, are deprived of many of the high and holy privileges of our position by moral defilement and spiritual defects. We are shorn of many of our dignities through defective spiritual development. We lack singleness of eye, spiritual vigour, whole-hearted devotedness. Saved we are through the free grace of God, on the ground of Christ's perfect sacrifice. "We are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus"; but, then, salvation is one thing, communion is quite another. Sonship is one thing, obedience is quite another. These things should be carefully distinguished. The section before us illustrates the distinction with great force and clearness. If one of the sons of Aaron happened to be "broken-footed, or broken-handed," was he deprived of his sonship? Assuredly not. Was he deprived of his priestly position? By no means. It was distinctly declared, "He shall eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy and of the holy." What, then, did he lose by his physical blemish? He was forbidden to tread some of the higher walks of priestly service and worship. "Only he shall not go in unto the vail, nor come nigh unto the altar." These were very serious privations; and though it may be objected that a man could not help many of these physical defects, that did not alter the matter. Jehovah could not have a blemished priest at His altar, or a blemished sacrifice thereon. Both the priest and the sacrifice should be perfect. Now we have both the perfect priest and the perfect sacrifice in the Person of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. (C. H. Mackintosh.)

Ver. 22. **He shall eat the bread of his God.**—*The Divine banquet*:—It is not easy to say whether the words, "bread of his God," refer generally to the sacrifices and offerings, or specially to the "shewbread." We take them as pointing to the latter; as, indeed, in any interpretation of the expression, the shewbread must be included, if not mainly intended. It was called the "shewbread"; or, more properly, "the bread of the presence"; the bread that stood on the King's table, and in the King's presence; the bread which was therefore intimately connected with Him who is called "the Angel of the Presence" (Isa. lxii. 9); the bread which was associated with Him whose "presence" went with Israel whithersoever they went (Exod. xxxiii. 14). I. IT IS PROVIDED BY GOD. As in carrying out His purpose in the old creation, He provided every fruit-bearing tree for man, so, in accomplishing the new creation, He has supplied the "food convenient." He has made the provision for His house; and He has also blessed it. For the sustaining the life which He imparts, He provides the food required. II. IT IS PREPARED BY GOD HIMSELF. Moses, as representing God, prepared the twelve loaves; and God Himself has prepared the better bread, the flesh of the Son of Man. "A body hast Thou prepared Me." In the history of the birth, the life, the sorrows, the hardships, the bloodshedding, the death of the incarnate Son of God, we have a description of the way in which the "shewbread" or "presence-bread" of the Church was prepared, according to God's own method, for our everlasting food. III. IT IS GIVEN TO US BY GOD. God causes it to be provided for us; nay, He prepares it Himself; and then having thus provided and prepared it, He gives it: "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son" (John iii. 16); "The bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give," &c. IV. WHO THEY ARE WHO FEAST ON IT. Perhaps the answer to such a question will be—God's priesthood, His Church. Nor would this be incorrect; yet it would be defective. No doubt this heavenly bread is for them, just as the tree of life was for Adam, or the Temple shewbread was for the sons of Aaron. But it is so specially called "the bread of our God"; and the table on which it is set is so specially God's own table; and the place where it is to be eaten is so manifestly the royal banquet-hall of heaven, that we come to the conclusion that God Himself is partaker of this feast as well as we. The King, sitting at His own table, in His own festal chamber, not only feeds His guests, but Himself partakes of that which is set before them. Israel's various sacri-

fices and offerings of all kinds were the various dishes set upon the great Temple table; each of them full of meaning; each of them containing that which would satisfy and comfort; every one of them setting forth some part of the glorious fulness of the God-man, as the true food of souls; and all of them together representing that complete and blessed feast of "fat things" partaken of by God and His redeemed, in some measure now, but hereafter to be more fully enjoyed at the great marriage-supper in the New Jerusalem, when that shall be fulfilled, so long realised but in parts and fragments, "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" (Rev. iii. 20). (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *The bread of God*:—It was an ancient heathen notion that in sacrifice food was provided for the deity in order thus to show him honour. And, doubtless, in Israel, ever prone to idolatry, there were many who rose no higher than this gross conception of the meaning of such words. Thus, in Psa. l. 8-15, God sharply rebukes Israel for so unworthy thoughts of Himself, using language at the same time which teaches the spiritual meaning of the sacrifice, regarded as the "food" or "bread" of God. . . . Of which language the plain teaching is this. If the sacrifices are called in the law "the bread of God," God asks not this bread from Israel in any material sense, or for any material need. He asks that which the offerings symbolise; thanksgiving, loyal fulfilment of covenant engagements to Him, and that loving trust which will call on Him in the day of trouble. Even so! Gratitude, loyalty, trust! this is the "food of God," this the "bread which He desires that we should offer, the bread which those Levitical sacrifices symbolised. For even as man, when hungry, craves food, and cannot be satisfied without it, so God, who is Himself Love, desires our love, and delights in seeing its expression in all those offices of self-forgetting and self-sacrificing service in which love manifests itself. This is to God even as is food to us. Love cannot be satisfied except with love returned; and we may say, with deepest humility and reverence, the God of love cannot be satisfied without love returned. Hence it is that the sacrifices, which in various ways symbolise the self-offerings of love and the fellowship of love, are called by the Holy Ghost "the food" or "bread of God." And yet we must, on no account, hasten to the conclusion, as many do, that therefore the Levitical sacrifices were only intended to express and symbolise the self-offering of the worshipper, and that this exhausts their significance. On the contrary, the need of infinite love for this "bread of God" cannot be adequately met and satisfied by the self-offering of any creature, and, least of all, by the self-offering of a sinful creature, whose very sin lies just in this, that he has fallen away from perfect love. The symbolism of the sacrifice as "the food of God," therefore, by this very phrase, points toward the self-offering in love of the eternal Son to the Father, and in behalf of sinners for the Father's sake. It was the sacrifice on Calvary which first became, in innermost reality, that "bread of God," which the ancient sacrifices were only in symbol. It was this, not regarded as satisfying Divine justice (though it did this), but as satisfying the Divine love; because it was the supreme expression of the perfect love of the incarnate Son of God to the Father, in His becoming "obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." (*S. H. Kellogg, D.D.*)

CHAPTER XXII.

VER. 11. *If the priest buy any soul . . . and he that is born.*—*Bought, or born*:—Strangers, sojourners, and servants upon hire were not to eat of holy things. It is so in spiritual matters still. But two classes were free at the sacred table—those who were bought with the priest's money, and those who were born into the priest's house. I. *BOUGHT.* Our great High Priest has bought with a price all those who put their trust in Him. They are His absolute property. Not for what they are in themselves, but for their Owner's sake they are admitted into the same privileges which He Himself enjoys, and they shall "eat of His meat." He has meat to eat which worldlings know not of. "Because ye belong to Christ," therefore shall ye share with your Lord. II. *BORN.* This is an equally sure way to privilege; if born in the Priest's house we take our place with the rest of the family. Regeneration makes us fellow-heirs, and of the same body; and, therefore, the peace, the joy, the glory, which the Father has given to Christ, Christ has given to us. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 21. It shall be perfect to be accepted.—*A plain man's sermon*.—1. The ceremonial law, as ordained by the hand of Moses and Aaron, called the worshippers of God to great carefulness before Him. Before their minds that solemn truth was ever made visible, "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." Nothing might be done thoughtlessly. Of every ceremony it might be said, "It must be perfect to be accepted." God must have the minds and thoughts of men, or He counts that they are no worshippers. We need to think a great deal more about how we come before the Most High; and if we thought more and prayed more, we should become more certain of our inability to do anything as we ought to do it, and we should be driven to a more entire dependence upon the Spirit of God in every act of worship. This in itself would be a great blessing. 2. The ceremonial law also engendered in men who did think a great respect for the holiness of God. They could not help seeing that God required everything in His service to be of the very best. They must have felt that sin was not a trifle, but a thing for which there must be life given and blood shed before it could be removed; and that life and blood must be the life and blood of a perfect and unblemished offering. 3. Under the Jewish ceremonial law, one of the most prominent thoughts, next to a great respect for the holiness of God, would be a deep regard for the law of God. Everywhere that the Israelite went he was surrounded by law. If men do not understand the law, they will not feel that they are sinners; and if they are not consciously sinners, they will never value the sin-offering. I. First, then, THE RULE OF OUR TEXT, "IT SHALL BE PERFECT TO BE ACCEPTED," MAY BE USED TO SHUT OUT ALL THOSE FAULTY OFFERINGS WHEREON SO MANY PLACE THEIR CONFIDENCE. 1. It most effectually judges and casts forth all self-righteousness, although this is the great deceit wherewith thousands are buoyed up with false hopes. "It shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein." If you can come up to this rule you shall be saved by your righteousness; but if you cannot reach you must fail of acceptance. 2. Why, look, ye that hope to be saved by your own doings, your nature at the very first is tainted! There is evil in your heart from the very beginning, so that you are not perfect and are not without blemish. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one. 3. Look again, for I feel sure that there must have been a blemish somewhere as matter of fact. As yet you are not conscious of a blemish; and possibly there is some justification for this unconsciousness. Looking upon you, I feel inclined to love you, as Jesus loved that young man who could say of the commandments, "All these have I kept from my youth up." But I must beg you to answer this question—Has there not been a blemish in your motives? What have you been doing all these good things for? "Why, that I might be saved!" Precisely so. Therefore selfishness has been the motive which has ruled your life. Moreover, it is not only your nature and your motive which are imperfect. You certainly must have erred somewhere or other, in some act of your life. The Scripture also is dead against you when it says, "There is none righteous; no, not one." 4. Methinks if I could read all hearts, there is not one here, however self-righteous he may be, who would not have to confess distinct acts of sin. I know how some of you have lived. You were amiable girls and excellent young women, and have grown up to be careful, loving wives; and therefore you say, "I never did anybody any harm; surely I may be accepted." I wish that there were more like you. I am not condemning you; far from it; but I know that your tendency is to think that because of all this you must in yourselves be accepted of God. Give me your hand, and let me say to you, with tears, "It is not so, my sister; it is not so, my brother. It must be perfect to be accepted; there must be no blemish in it." This is a death-blow for your self-confidence; for there was a time, some day or other in your life, in which you did wrong. What! have you no hasty temper? Have no quick words escaped you which you would wish to recall? What! have you never murmured against God, or complained of His providence? Have you never been slothful when you ought to have been diligent? Can you say that your heart has never desired evil—never imagined impurity? Have you never gone to live in an old house which looked like new? You had fresh paint, and varnish, and paper in superabundance; and you thought yourself dwelling in one of the sweetest of places, till one day it happened that a board was taken up, and you saw under the floor. What a gathering of every foul thing! You could not have lived in that house at peace for a minute had you known what had been covered up. Rottness had been hidden, decay had been doctored, death had been decorated. That is just like our humanity. When lusts are quiet, they are all there. The best man in

this place, who is not a believer in Christ, would go mad if he were to see himself as God sees him. 5. This text makes a clean sweep of all other kinds of human confidences. Some are deceived in this sort: "Well," they say, "I do not trust in my works; but I am a religious person, and I attend the sacrament, and I go to my place of worship pretty regularly. I feel that I must certainly be right. I have faith in Jesus Christ and in myself." In various ways men thus compose an image whose feet are part of iron and part of clay. II. As this rule shuts out all other confidences, so THIS RULE SHUTS US UP TO THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS CHRIST. Oh, if I had the tongues of men and of angels, I could never fitly tell you of Him who offered Himself without spot unto God, for He is absolutely perfect; there is no blemish in Him! 1. He is perfect in His nature as God and man. There was not the possibility of sinning about the Saviour—no tendency that way, no desire that way. Nothing that could be construed into evil ever came upon His character. 2. As He was perfect in His nature, so was He in His motive. What brought Him from above but love to God and man? You can find no trace of ambition in Christ Jesus. In Him there is no thought of self. 3. As His nature was perfect, so was His spirit. He was never sinfully angry, nor harsh, nor untrue, nor idle. The air of His soul was the atmosphere of heaven rather than of earth. 4. Look at His life of obedience, and see how perfect that was. Which commandment did He ever break? Which duty of relationship did He ever forget? He honoured the law of God and loved the souls of men. 5. Look at the perfection of His sacrifice. He gave His body to be tortured, and His mind to be crushed and broken, even unto the death-agony. He gave Himself for us a perfect sacrifice. All that the law could ask was in Him. III. Listen, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that know the Lord! You are saved. You have not, therefore, to bring any sacrifice by way of a sin-offering, but you have to bring SACRIFICES OF THANKSGIVING. It is your reasonable service that you offer your bodies a living sacrifice unto God. If you do this you cannot bring an absolutely perfect sacrifice, but you must labour to let it be perfect in what is often the Biblical sense of perfection. You must take care that what you bring is not blind, for the blind were not to be offered. You must serve God with a single eye to the glory of God. And as it must not be blind, so it must not be broken. Whenever we serve God, we must do it with the whole of our being, for if we try to serve God with a bit of our nature, and leave the rest unconsecrated, we shall not be accepted. Next, they were not to bring a maimed sacrifice: that is, one without its limbs. Some people give grudgingly, that is to say, they come up to the collection-box with a limp. Many serve Christ with a broken arm. The holy work is done, but it is painfully and slowly done. Among the heathen, I believe, they never offered in sacrifice to the gods a calf that had to be carried. The reason was that they considered that the sacrifice ought to be willing to be offered, and so it must be able to walk up to the altar. Notice in the Old Testament, though there were many creatures, both birds and beasts, that were offered to God, they never offered any fish on the holy altar. The reason probably is that a fish could not come there alive. Its life would be spent before it came to the altar, and therefore it could not render a life unto God. Take care that you bring your bodies a living sacrifice. We must not bring Him the mere chrysalis of a man, out of which the life has gone; but we must bring before Him our living, unmaimed selves if we would be acceptable before Him. It is then added, "or having a wen." It does not look as though it would hurt the sacrifice much to have a wen; yet there must not be a wen, or spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Above all, avoid that big wen of pride. The sacrifice was not to be scabbed, or to have the scurvy. That is to say, it was to be without any sort of outward fault. I have heard men say, "It is true I did not do that thing well, but my heart was right." That may be, but you must try and make the whole matter as good as it can be. What a deal of scabbed service our Lord gets! Men try to be benevolent to their fellow-creatures with an irritable temper. Certain people try to serve God, and write stinging letters to promote brotherly love, and dogmatical epistles in favour of large-mindedness. Too many render to the Lord hurried, thoughtless worship; and many more give for offerings their smallest coins and such things as they will never miss. God has many a scurvy sheep brought before Him. The best of the best should be given to the Best of the best. Would God that the best of our lives, the best hours of the morning, the best skill of our hands, the best thoughts of our minds, the very cream of our being, were given to our God! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Offerings to be without blemish*:—1. This law was, then, necessary for the preserving of the honour of the sanctuary and of the

God that was there worshipped. 2. This law made all the legal sacrifices the fitter to be types of Christ, the great Sacrifice, from which all those derived their virtue. 3. It is an instruction to us to offer to God the best we have in our spiritual sacrifices. If our devotions be ignorant, and cold, and trifling, and full of distractions, we offer the blind, and the lame, and the sick for sacrifice. But cursed be the deceiver that doth so, for while he thinks to put a cheat upon God, he puts a damning cheat upon his own soul. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*) *Blemishes in our sacrifices*:—All religious service is of the nature of sacrifice. I. Read this requirement of perfect sacrifices, and by it let us test our regard for the SABBATH SERVICES. God has once, at least, read us a very solemn lesson of the manner in which He regards lost Sabbaths. Seventy Sabbatical years the Jews allowed to drop out of their calendar. Seventy years were spent by them in captivity. A fearful presage to us of what might be the national judgment if, as a Church and people, we went on to blot out from amongst us our day of rest. Every one will agree that if the Sabbath be obligatory, then it is assuredly obligatory thus far—1. That there be regular attendance upon public service. 2. Of the other hours of the day, that a part be spent in private devotional exercises, a part in religious reading; that a higher and more sacred tone of conversation be maintained; that some work of piety and love be performed. II. By this test let us judge our SANCTUARY WORSHIP. Examine ourselves in the house of God. Difficulty of keeping the mind collected and devout results from want of due preparation. 1. Something may be said respecting the posture of body we assume in the sanctuary. Position of body reacts upon the mind. Indolence is associated with, and leads to, irreverence. Kneeling is required equally by the dignity of God and the weakness of our nature. 2. So with the voice. Difficult to overestimate how much is lost—(a) to the beauty of our services; (b) to the glory of God; (c) to our own souls, by the silence so many of us maintain, both in the responses and in the service of song. But there are more serious “blemishes” in our sanctuary sacrifices than these. Whereis—(1) The constant mental effort essential to true worship and proper in the presence of God? (2) The self-distrust due from such sinful creatures as we? (3) The self-discipline to bring ourselves into responsiveness to God’s Spirit? (4) The inward up-looking for Divine light and grace? (5) The frequent reminding our selves of what we are and what God is? (6) The simple spirit of self-application? (7) The faith to give wings to prayer? Well might St. James say, “Ye have not because ye ask not, or ask amiss.” “Blemish on sacrifice” drives the flame down again. III. By this test let us examine our observance of the SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER. A word in solemn affection to some. You never attend the sacrament to celebrate the Lord’s death at all. Others, if at all, so irregularly as almost to turn the attendance into a mockery. 1. Happy for us that we can turn from all our poor “blemished” sacrifices to that pure and perfect sacrifice of Christ, which has been offered “without blemish and without spot” for us. 2. Only let us never forget that he who would safely trust in the power of that “Sacrifice” for his salvation must take the spotlessness of that Sacrifice for his daily pattern. (*Anon.*) *Giving the worst to God*:—A pastor went one day to call on a member of his church, who was a farmer. During the conversation the work of Christian benevolences was touched upon, and the farmer proudly alluded to the fact that out of his few acres of ground he always set aside one acre to the Lord’s use. The pastor, hoping to here get the material for an illustration in his own work, asked the farmer brother, “Which acre do you set aside?” This was a question that came very unexpectedly, but the farmer was honest enough to tell the truth, and replied, “When it is a dry season, I select one up there,” pointing to a field on the hillside; “and when it is a wet season, I choose one down there,” pointing to a field of very low land which lay at the foot of the hill. I give this illustration, not on account of its rarity, but because it is a true picture of thousands of professed Christians, who give to God’s service that part of their time and means that is left after first satisfying their own personal selfish ends. (*Sharpened Arrows.*) *God ought to have the best*:—One cold morning a little ragged, woeful-looking child came in at our back door, begging for food. “Please, ma’am, me ’nd the children most starved. Only a bit o’ bread.” “Have you no father or mother, child?” asked I. “Yes’m,” and a look of shame and despair mantled his hollow cheeks. “Don’t they work and earn money?” “Yes’m, little; but they most allus spend it afore they gets home, at the ‘Horn o’ Plenty.’” Immediately my heart became adamant. The miserable, drunken brutes, thought I, I’ll not feed their children. Then I remembered there is a very stale loaf of bread in the cupboard,

scarcely fit for toast. I gave that to the child, very glad to dispose of it. He grabbed it eagerly, with a clutch that reminded one of the grasp of the drowning, when they would fain save themselves. Little Gracie, our six-year-old darling, had been a silent spectator; but after the boy departed, she came to me with deep inquiry depicted upon her spiritual countenance, saying, "Mamma, if Jesus Christ had come and said He was starving to death, would you have given Him that awful dry loaf of bread?" "Why, child," said I, "why do you ask such a question?" "Why, when we give to the poor, ought we not to think that we are really giving to Jesus Himself? I thought He said so when here upon the earth." "Well, Gracie," said I, kissing her sweet, troubled face, "I think you are right, and I will remember your lesson next time. Yes, Gracie, we, whom the Lord hath blessed in our 'granary and our store,' would soon relieve suffering humanity if we gave our alms as if we really were giving to the 'Blessed Redeemer.' We are too prone to forget this truth." "The very best that we have in the house isn't too good for Him, is it, mamma?" asked she. "No, no, my precious child," replied I, clasping her to my heart and thinking, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength and wisdom." (*Christian Age.*) *Worthless offerings*:—A missionary in China, describing in the *Sunday at Home*, the sacrifices which are offered to Confucius at the usual and autumnal equinoxes, says, "We looked at the victims, and they were diseased, scraggy brutes, worthless offerings. Oh, the mockery and the utter insincerity and indifference of the Chinese mind to all sense of honour! My friend explained the matter to me; he said they were allowed so much by the Treasury for this purpose, and the cheaper they could get the animals the more they could pocket." (*J. Tinling.*)

Vers. 31-33. **I am the Lord.**—*Five motives to obedience*:—Five motives are strewn on their path to constrain them to close obedience. 1. "I am the Lord." This is authority employed. 2. "I will be hallowed among the children of Israel." This is His holiness, and His desire to diffuse awe of His holy name. 3. "I am the Lord which hallow you." Here is an appeal to their privileges as Israelites. Do you not feel that you actually are set apart for Me? 4. "I am the Lord which brought you out of Egypt." Here is His claim as Redeemer, who paid the price and set free the captives. Is there gratitude in your souls? Is there sense of thankfulness for favour done? 5. "Your God"—as well as your Lord: His claim as Father, Shepherd, King, and whatever else there is that is tender in relationship, or beneficial in office, or sweet in character—all is summed up in "your God"! Who is like "our God"? "Who would not fear Thee?" (*Jer. x. 7.*) (*A. A. Bonar.*) *Unquestioning obedience peremptorily enforced*:—I. WHAT JEHOVAH WAS IN ISRAEL. "I am the Lord." II. WHAT JEHOVAH WAS TO ISRAEL. "Your God." III. WHAT JEHOVAH HAD DONE FOR ISRAEL. "That brought you out of the land of Egypt." IV. WHAT JEHOVAH WOULD DO WITH ISRAEL. "I am the Lord which hallow you." Ceremonially and symbolically priests and people were made holy by—1. The rights they observed. 2. The sacrifices they offered. 3. The manifested presence of the Lord. (*F. W. Brown.*)

CHAPTER XXIII.

Vers. 2-44. **These are My feasts.**—*The holy festivals*:—I. Commentators generally on this part of Hebrew law have remarked upon the SOCIAL, POLITICAL, and COMMERCIAL BENEFITS RESULTING TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE FROM THESE NATIONAL FESTIVALS AND CONVOCATIONS. They served to unite the nation, cemented them together as one people, and prevented the tendency to the formation of separate cliques and conflicting clans or states. These convocations also had great effect upon the internal commerce of the Hebrew people. They furnished facilities for mutual exchanges, and opened the ways of trade and business between the various sections. II. There was also a DIRECT RELIGIOUS VALUE AND FORETHOUGHT IN THE APPOINTMENT OF THESE FESTIVALS. They prescribed public consociation in worship. Man is a worshipping being. It is not only his duty, but his nature and native instinct to worship. Mere isolated worship, without association in common set services, soon dwindles, flags, degenerates, and corrupts. Neither does it ever reach that majesty and intense

inspiration which comes from open congregation in the same great acts of devotion. "As iron sharpeneth iron, so man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." And just as the multitude of these mutual sharpeners is increased, will their common devotion be deepened and augmented. III. I propose to speak more particularly of THE TYPICAL RELATIONS OF THESE HOLY FEASTS AND SEASONS. We have in them a system of types, chronologically arranged, to set forth the true course of time—to prefigure the whole history of redemption in its leading outlines from the commencement to the close. 1. The first was the Passover. It was a sort of perpetual commemoration of their deliverance from the oppressor and from death—a standing testimonial that their salvation was by the blood of the Lamb. It was the keynote of the Christian system sounding in the dim depths of remote antiquity. That bondage in Egypt referred to a still deeper and more degrading slavery of the spirit. That redemption was the foreshadow of a far greater deliverance. And that slain lamb and its sprinkled blood pointed to a meeker, purer, and higher Victim, whose body was broken and blood shed for us and for many for the remission of sins. 2. The next was the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which was a sort of continuation of the Passover on the next day. The one refers to what Christ does and is to the believer, and the other refers to what the true believer does in return. The one refers to our redemption by blood and our deliverance from condemnation; the other to our repentance and consecration to a new life of obedience, separated from the leaven of unrighteousness. It is therefore plain why both were thus joined together as one. Redemption is nothing to us if it does not lead us to a purification of ourselves from the filthy ways and associations of the wicked. We can only effectually keep the gospel feast by purging out the old leaven of malice and wickedness. Seven days was this Feast of Unleavened Bread to be kept—a full period of time. We are to "serve God in righteousness and holiness all the days of our life." Our work is not done until the week of our stay in this world ends. We must be faithful until death. 3. Joined with the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread was the additional service of presenting before God the first sheaf of the barley harvest. "This," says Cumming, "was a beautiful institution, to teach the Israelites that it was not the soil, nor the raindrops, nor the sunbeams, nor the dews, nor the skill of their agriculturists, that they had to thank for their bounteous produce; but that they must rise above the sower and reaper, and see God, the Giver of the golden harvest, and make His praise the keynote to their harvest-home." It was all this, but it had also a deeper and more beautiful meaning. The broad field, sowed with good seed, with its golden ears ripening for the harvest, is Christ's own chosen figure of His kingdom upon earth, and the congregation of His believing children maturing for the garner of eternal life. In that field the chief sheaf is Jesus Christ Himself; for He was in all respects "made like unto His brethren." He is the "firstfruits." He was gathered first, and received into the treasure-house of heaven. It was the Passover time when He came to perfect ripeness. It was during these solemnities that He was "cut off." And when the Spirit of God lifted Him from the sepulchre, and the heavens opened to receive Him, then did the waving of the sheaf of firstfruits have its truest and highest fulfilment. Until this sheaf was thus offered along with the blood of atonement there could be no harvest for us. 4. There was another harvest, and another festival service connected with its opening, fifty days later than the barley harvest. This was the wheat harvest, at which was celebrated the Feast of Weeks, otherwise called Pentecost. The Passover shows us Christ crucified; the sheaf of firstfruits shows us Christ raised from the dead and lifted up to heaven as our forerunner; and the Pentecostal feast, with its two leavened loaves, shows us Christ in the gracious influences of His Spirit wrought into the hearts and lives of those who constitute His earthly Church. This spiritual kneading took its highest and most active form on that memorable Pentecost when the disciples "were all with one accord in one place," and the Holy Spirit came down upon them with gifts of mighty power. Three thousand souls were that day added to the Church. It was a glad and glorious day for Christianity. It was the firstfruits of wheat harvest brought with joyous thanksgiving unto God. But it was only the firstfruits—the earnest of a vast and plenteous harvest of the same kind ripening on the same fields. Thenceforward the world was to be filled with glad reapers gathering in the sheaves, and with labourers kneading the contents of those sheaves into loaves for God. Leaven there needs is in those loaves; but, presented along with the blood of the chief of the flock and herd, they still become acceptable to Him who ordained the service. There was a peculiar requirement connected with these laws for the wheat

harvest well worthy of special attention. The corners of the fields and the gleanings were to be left. This was a beautiful feature in these arrangements. It presents a good lesson, of which we ought never to lose sight. But it was also a type. Of what, I have not seen satisfactorily explained, though the application seems easy. If the wheat harvest refers to the gathering of men from sin to Christianity, and from subjects of Satan to subjects of grace, then the plain indication of this provision is that the entire world, under this present dispensation, shall not be completely converted to God. I believe that the time will come, and that it is largely and fully predicted in the Scriptures, when "all shall know the Lord from the least unto the greatest"—when there will not be a single sinner left upon the earth. But that time will not come until a new dispensation with new instrumentalities shall have been introduced. 5. The next was the Feast of Trumpets. This was held on the first day of the seventh month of the ecclesiastical year, which was the same as the first month of the civil year. It was therefore a new-year festival, and at the same time the feast of introduction to the Sabbatic month. Its chief peculiarity was the continual sounding of trumpets from morning till evening. It was the grand type of the preaching of the gospel. The Feast of Trumpets was, to a great extent, a preliminary of the great Day of Atonement. We have already considered the peculiarities of this solemn day. Its leading thought is contained in its name—at-one-ment—that is, agreement, reconciliation, harmony, and peace with God. The Feast of Trumpets was a call to this at-one-ment. The gospel is an appeal to men to be reconciled to God. 6. Immediately succeeding the great solemnity on the fifteenth day of the month began another remarkable festival called the Feast of Tabernacles. It was to commemorate the forty years of tent life which their fathers led in the wilderness, and pointed, the same as that which it commemorated, to that period of the Christian's career which lies between his deliverance from bondage and his entrance into rest—that is, between his reconciliation to God and his final inheritance of the promises. It celebrates the state of the believer while he yet remains in this present life. This world is not our dwelling-place. We are pilgrims and strangers here, tarrying for a little season in tents and booths which we must soon vacate and leave to decay. "The earthly house of this tabernacle" must "be dissolved." The places that know us now shall soon know us no more. "Seven days"—a full period—were the people of Israel to remain in these temporary tabernacles. And thus shall we be at the inconvenience of a tent life for the full period of our earthly stay. But it was only once in a year that Israel kept the Feast of Tabernacles. And so, when we once leave the flesh, we shall never return to it again. Our future bodies shall be glorified, celestial, spiritual bodies. It is also a precious thought connected with this subject that when the Jews left their tents at the conclusion of the Feast of Tabernacles it was the Sabbath morning. This frail tent life is after all to be rounded off with the calm quiet of a consecrated day that has no night, and to merge into a rest that is never more to end. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *Feasts of the Lord*:—I. SACRED LIFE IS ITSELF A FESTIVAL. 1. Divine in its origin. 2. Blissful in its quality. 3. Enriched with frequent delights. II. THE CHRISTIAN YEAR HAS ITS FESTIVITIES. 1. Time is interrupted by sacred seasons. 2. Human life is refreshed by the blessings of religion. 3. A witness to what is God's will for man. III. GRACIOUS SEASONS ARE APPOINTED FOR THE CHURCH. 1. Days of rest and gladness. 2. Special times of revival. 3. Foretaste of Heaven's joy. (*W. H. Jellie.*) *The great feasts*:—I. POLITICAL EFFECTS. Annual gatherings of the people exhibited the numerical strength of the nation. As they went "from strength to strength," *i.e.*, from company to company (*Psa. lxxxiv. 7 marg.*), on their way to Jerusalem, and saw the vast crowds flocking from all parts of the kingdom to the capital, their patriotic ardour would be fired. The unity of the nation, too, would be ensured by this fusion of the tribes. Otherwise they would be likely to constitute separate tribal states. They would carry back to the provinces glowing accounts of the wealth, power, and resources of the country. II. SANITARY EFFECTS. They would greatly influence the health of the people. The Sabbath, necessitating weekly cleansings, and rest from work, and laws and ceremonies concerning disease (as leprosy) and purifications, deserve to be looked at in this light also. The annual purifying of the houses at Feast of Unleavened Bread; the dwelling at certain times in tents—leaving the houses to the free circulation of light and air; and the repeated journey on foot to Jerusalem, must have had a great sanitary influence. As man was the great object of creation, so his welfare—in many respects besides religion—was plainly aimed at in these regulations. III. SOCIAL EFFECTS. Promoted friendly intercourse between travelling companions. Distributed information through

the country at a time when the transmission of news was slow and imperfect. Imported into remote provincial districts a practical knowledge of all improvements in arts and sciences. Enlarged the general stock of knowledge by bringing many minds and great variety of taste together. Spread before the eyes of the nation the wonders collected in Jerusalem by the wealth and foreign alliances of Jewish kings. IV. MORAL EFFECTS. The young looking forward to, the aged looking back upon, and all talking about past or future pilgrimages to the city of the great King. Education, thus, of memory and hope and desire. Influence of this on the habits of the people. Thrift promoted to provide against expenses of the journey. The promise of bearing company held out as reward to well-conducted youth. Enlargement of knowledge, improvement of taste, advantage to health, fixing habits, &c., would all react morally on the character of the people. V. RELIGIOUS EFFECTS. These the most important. Preserved the religious faith of the nation, and religious unity among the people. Constantly reminded the people of the Divinely wrought deliverances of the past. Promoted gratitude and trust. Testified the reverence of the people for the Temple and its sacred contents. Influence of well-conducted Temple services upon the synagogues through the land. Led the mind of the nation to adore the one true and only God. (*J. C. Gray.*) *Seven feasts mentioned in this chapter:*—There were seven feasts which God commanded His people to observe every year. All these feasts are mentioned in this chapter, and should be studied together so that their relation may be seen. The first, the Sabbath, commemorated God's rest from the work of creation, and typified the rest of God's people in the eternal Sabbath-keeping. The second, the Passover, commemorated Israel's redemption through the blood of the paschal lamb, prior to their exodus from bondage, and typified our redemption through Christ's blood, previous to our exodus from the bondage of sin to the liberty wherewith Christ makes us free (Gal. v. 1). The third, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, typified the holiness of life for which they were redeemed through blood (1 Cor. v. 7, 8). The fourth, the Firstfruits, was a grateful assurance of the coming harvest, and typical of the resurrection unto life of all believers, because Christ as their firstfruits has risen from the dead (1 Cor. xv. 20, 23). The fifth, the Pentecost, has become universally known by being the day on which the Holy Spirit was given to the twelve in the upper room in Jerusalem (Acts ii. 1-4), and as in the Feast of Firstfruits (type of Christ's resurrection), the sheaf of the firstfruits of the barley harvest was waved before the Lord, so on the Day of Pentecost, the sheaf of the firstfruits of the wheat harvest, typical of the gift of the Holy Spirit and prophetic of the harvest of souls gathered to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. The fifth, Feast of Trumpets, typical of Israel's ingathering for their millennial privileges, and of the call to all the world to come to the gospel feast. The sixth, the Day of Atonement, typical of Christ's atonement. The seventh, the Feast of Tabernacles. (*D. C. Hughes, M.A.*) *God's holy days:*—Here we have a general account of the holy times which God appointed (ver. 2); and it is only His appointment that can make time holy. For He is the Lord of time; and as soon as ever He had set its wheels agoing, it was He that first sanctified and blessed one day above the rest (Gen. ii. 3). Man may by His appointment make a good day (Esther ix. 19), but it is God's prerogative to make a holy day; nor is anything sanctified but by the stamp of His institution. As all inherent holiness comes from His special grace, so all adherent holiness from His special appointment. Now concerning the holy times here ordained, observe—1. They are called feasts. The Day of Atonement, which was one of them, was a fast; yet, because most of them were appointed for joy and rejoicing, they are in general called feasts. Some read it, "These are My assemblies," but that is coincident with convocations. I would rather read it, "These are My solemnities"; so the Word here used is translated (Isa. xxxiii. 20), where Zion is called "the city of our solemnities." And reading it so here the Day of Atonement was as great a solemnity as any of them. 2. They are the feasts of the Lord: "My feasts." Observed to the honour of His name, and in obedience to His command. 3. They were proclaimed; for they were not to be observed by the priests only that attended the sanctuary, but by all the people. And this proclamation was the joyful sound which they were blessed that were within hearing of (Psa. lxxxix. 15). 4. They were to be sanctified and solemnised with holy convocations that the services of these feasts might appear the more honourable and august, and the people more unanimous in the performance of them. It was for the honour of God and His institutions, which sought not corners, and the purity of which would be best preserved by the public administration of them; it

was also for the edification of the people in love that the feasts were to be observed as holy convocations. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*) *God's festivals*:—The solemnities appointed were—1. Many, and returned frequently; which was intended to preserve in them a deep sense of God and religion, and to prevent their inclining to the superstitions of the heathen. God kept them fully employed in His service that they might not have time to hearken to the temptations of the idolatrous neighbourhood they lived in. 2. They were most of them times of joy and rejoicing. The weekly Sabbath is so, and all their yearly solemnities except the Day of Atonement. God would thus teach them that wisdom's ways are pleasantness; and oblige them to His service by obliging them to be cheerful in it and to sing at their work. Seven days were days of strict rest and holy convocations: The first day, and the seventh, of the Feast of Unleavened Bread; the Day of Pentecost; the day of the Feast of Trumpets; the first day, and the eighth, of the Feast of Tabernacles; and the Day of Atonement: here were six for holy joy, and one for holy mourning. We are commanded to rejoice evermore, but not to be evermore weeping. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 5. In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's passover. —*The Passover*:—The typical character of the Old Testament is a subject full of instruction, and one which opens a very extensive field of investigation before the mind of the Christian student. It presents itself to our view not only in the ordinances of the Jewish people, their sacrifices and priesthood, and religious rites in general, but also in the historical parts of these lively oracles. Many of the events recorded in these sacred pages have not only an historical, but also a typical, or in other words a prophetic interest. They were, in fact, living prophecies, having each his manifest counterpart or antitype somewhere in the gospel scheme. But this observation particularly applies to the ordinances of the Ceremonial Law. These rites had, no doubt, a duty to accomplish on behalf of those who celebrated them, and subserved some moral purpose towards them who did the service. But they had also a higher object; they had all a Christian aspect, or, as the apostle to the Hebrews says, they were “the shadows of good things to come.” In the former bearing they have long since passed away, but in the latter they are still abiding. And what an important addition have we here to the prophetic evidence of Christianity! For these rites and ceremonies must, every one of them, be regarded as predictions of those things they typified. Every well-established type is an instance of fulfilled prophecy; and when we view them all combined we have a congeries of prophecies manifestly fulfilled, and affording an amount of accumulated evidence which must be convincing to any candid mind. In all the necessary elements of prophetic evidence the argument derived from these types is remarkably certain and facile. Their antiquity, or priority in point of time to their antitypes, is undoubted, it is admitted on all hands. They were celebrated by successive generations for centuries before those things which answered to them appeared to human observation, or could be known in any other way than by Divine revelation. Their fulfilment, also, is equally certain; we compare the antitypes with the types, and find them answer the one to the other in an immense variety of particulars. It is utterly impossible that this agreement should be the result of accident; it is so minute, and carried out into such numerous ramifications, that it exceeds even the credulity of infidelity itself to ascribe it to anything but design. Here, as in a kind of panorama, that gospel passes before us, so that we, as it were, behold with our eyes those very truths which are the source of our present and eternal peace. And this, perhaps, is one reason why these ordinances are so minutely enjoined; why we find so many, and sometimes such trifling particulars commanded. The sceptic smiles at this minuteness, and refuses to believe that God could condescend to be the author of such unimportant injunctions. The reply to this is at once suggested from the book of nature, where the Deist professes to become acquainted with his God. We bid him to consult that book which is open before his eyes, and behold the minuteness of detail which characterises all the works that meet him there. See the particularity of design and of execution which pervades its every part. Has not the same hand which restrains the billows of the mighty ocean in their proper bounds painted the tiny shells which are buried in its deep abyss? But to the believer, who recognises the gospel in these ordinances, this very minuteness with which they are prescribed constitutes their perfection. He sees in this a representation of that condescending love which has ordained every particular of that covenant of grace—“the covenant ordered in all things, and sure.” And not only so, but everything to him becomes significant; he could not part with one of

them; and all together make up a perfect whole on which his faith is founded. We are to consider the feast of the Passover, instituted, as its name implies, in commemoration of that night in which the Lord passed over the houses of the Israelites when He smote the first-born in the land of Egypt. In order, then, to understand aright the typical or prophetic bearing of this ordinance, we must recall to mind the transactions of that memorable night, and—I. THE LAND OF EGYPT EXHIBITS A TYPE OF THIS PRESENT EVIL WORLD—THE WORLD, I MEAN, AS DISTINCT FROM THE CHURCH AND PEOPLE OF GOD. Egypt was ripened for judgment, and was devoted to destruction. She had despised her opportunities and hardened herself against the warnings of Jehovah, and was now arrayed in hostility against God and His people. And such is the world in which we live, it is destined to destruction; and why? Because it has rejected alike the mercies and the warnings of the Lord; it has despised His counsel and will have none of His reproof. And there is one point of analogy between the case of Egypt and that of this present world which is especially deserving of attention; I mean the fact that the climax in either case is preceded by a succession of judgments. I feel persuaded, my dear brethren, that we ought to be prepared for an outpouring of Divine judgments upon the earth, the effect of which shall be, as in the case of Egypt, the hardening of "the men of the earth," against the Lord and against His anointed (Rev. ix. 20, 21; Luke xxi. 35, 36). II. BUT GOD HAD A PEOPLE IN EGYPT. They were in Egypt, but they were not of it; differing in their origin, their customs, their laws, their worship, and their God. They were the people of Jehovah; His by covenant arrangement; His chosen ones, His own. And why were they chosen? Was it because of their own goodness? because they were better than the other nations? No; for they were a stiff-necked people. Why, then, were they chosen? Simply because He loved them, and took them to Himself out of all the nations of the earth. And so it is at the present time. The Lord has a people in the world, but yet not of the world. "Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." But if He has loved His people, He has "made them to differ" from Egypt. As they are His by sovereign grace, so also are they His by manifest consecration to Him and separation from the world. Their origin is from above. They are "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." III. BUT WHAT WAS THE MEANS BY WHICH THE ISRAELITES WERE SAVED FROM THE JUDGMENT OF EGYPT? It was the sprinkled blood (Exod. xii. 12, 13). And so if we escape the righteous judgment of God it can only be by the sprinkling of the blood of the Lamb—"the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. i. 19). Outside of Christ is wrath, in Him is perfect peace and safety. Not that this sprinkled blood is the exciting cause of God's love unto His people. No; He needed not this inducement. God did not love the children of Israel because the blood was sprinkled on their houses; no, the blood was sprinkled there because He loved them. They misunderstand the doctrine of the atonement who represent it as appeasing a God of vengeance and stimulating Him to mercy. "God is love." IV. THE ISRAELITES WERE COMMANDED TO FEAST UPON THE LAMB. The lamb was to be the food of them for whom his blood was sprinkled. And what is the spiritual food supplied to the Church of God? It is the Lamb that was slain (John vi. 57). If we would have spiritual strength to do the work of God we can derive it only by feeding on, that is, by habitually contemplating and confiding in the work of Jesus. A living faith in Him will appropriate Him. And when the Passover is called a feast we are reminded that those who feed on Jesus have in Him not only necessities, but abundance; not only salvation, but peace and happiness and joy—"fat things full of marrow, wines on the lees well refined" (Isa. xxv. 6). You see we are supposed to be ever feasting. And if our souls are not abundantly satisfied, as with marrow and fatness, the fault is entirely our own. The provision is made; all things are ready; everything that the hospitality of eternal love, aided by the counsels of infinite wisdom and the resources of infinite power could procure to make glad the sinner's heart. Why do we go so heavily on our way? Why have we so little peace and joy? It is because we do not feed, as we should, upon the Lamb. We do not make Him our daily bread, and incorporate Him, by a living faith, with our souls. And mark, the whole of the paschal lamb was eaten; not one particle of it was to be left. 'Tis thus the Saviour gives Himself altogether to be His people's food; it is not a part, but the whole of a precious Christ that is provided for us. All the holiness of His life, all the devotedness of His death, all the efficacy of His blood, all the power of His resurrection—the dignity of His ascension—the influence of His intercession, and the glory of His coming again;

everything He does—He has—He is; the whole is given unto us to feast upon; and we need it all. I must have Him all to meet the exigency of my case, the necessities of my soul. V. But let us remark THE ADJUNCTS OF THIS FEAST. They were to eat it with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs; with staves in their hands and shoes on their feet. Each particular is significant. Are they to eat it with unleavened bread? If we would have communion with Jesus it must be “in the Spirit.” The carnal mind cannot find enjoyment in Him; and if we are walking after the flesh we cannot feed on Him. We must “put it out of our houses,” so as not to follow or be led by it. Again, too, “the bitter herbs.” Oh! how significant is this! The paschal feast is not a feast of self-indulgence; it is not to gratify the carnal mind. They that feed on Jesus must deny themselves, and take up the cross and follow Him. The path He leads in is not that of self-gratification and carnal ease. If these be the objects we pursue we are not—we cannot be feeding on the Lamb (Gal. ii. 20). It is impossible for the true believer to escape the taste of the “bitter herbs.” The very principles which actuate him, the motives of which he is conscious, the tastes implanted in his mind are such as to render his life in this world a scene of constant trial. There are trials peculiar to the Christian which others have not, and cannot even understand. Beloved, let us search our hearts diligently; let us examine our motives. Are we indeed sincere before God? Are we really humbled before the Cross, and has every other shadow of dependence been put away? And are we dressed, too, in the garb of pilgrims? Or rather have we the pilgrim’s heart? Or are our thoughts and affections given to the things of earth—the flesh-pots of Egypt? (J. B. Lowe, B.A.)

Vers. 9-15. *When ye be come into the land.*—*The conditions of the spiritual land-tenure*:—I. MAN’S TRUE RELATION TO THE LAND OF PROMISE. 1. In his original estate man realised his dependence upon God, and his responsibility before God for the true and righteous use of all God’s gifts. As long as man used God’s glorious gifts in obedience to God’s supreme law of love, his life was blessed with the fullness of weal: “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat.” But in the day when the sense of responsibility to God was lost, and the commandment which embraced in itself the significance of all the other commandments was broken, the disorders and the miseries of human society arose. The spirit of individual selfishness is the power which disorganises society, which brings a blight upon the garden of God, and drives human souls out from the glory and wealth into the thorny, desolate wilderness. There is no power that can enable man to dress the garden and to keep it, but the sense of responsibility to the one supreme Lord of Life, whose name is Love. This principle is the Divinely ordained power that suffices to check the deadly evils that arise from exaggerated notions of the rights of human property. In human society gifts are unequally distributed. The gifts of genius and the external gifts of property are alike unequal. In the ownership of the riches of mind we see men endowed with vast territories of knowledge and intellectual power. It is God’s order. Gifts are not equally divided. So the land is not, and never can be, possessed in absolutely equal portions by the citizens of a state. There must be the large landowners and the multitude of the poor who have but little. Where is the check that is to restrain the abuses of property? In the perpetual remembrance of the truth that the proudest landowner is but a tenant who holds from God, upon God’s conditions, in order that the land may be dressed and kept so as to promote the greatest possible happiness of the greatest possible number. 2. Another truth closely related to our absolute dependence upon God’s love, and the realisation of which is equally necessary to our spiritual health, is declared in this passage, viz., that the occupiers of the land of promise can only enjoy the fruits which God gives upon God’s conditions. The king upon the throne who has not a kingly heart and soul occupies a land of promise, but does not eat of its fruits. In all the professions of human activity, from the highest to the humblest, the enjoyment of the noblest fruits of the position can only be realised by those who know how to perform the duties which belong to it. The conditions of enjoyment are imposed upon the occupiers of every land of promise. The blessed land of rest, towards which human souls are travelling through the wilderness of earthly struggles, can only produce its harvest, and pour forth its stores of milk and honey to those who shall have been made “meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” II. THE CONDITIONS UPON WHICH THE FRUITS OF CANAAN CAN BE EATEN. 1. The elevated use of the gifts of life. The man who uses God’s gifts to pamper his lusts, by feeding the low life of debased animalism, lowers the corn of the

field below its original level by devoting it to the "table of devils," as the food taken to create blood for the heart in which the basest, foulest feelings have their homes, and for the brain, out of which the thoughts that are set on fire of hell wing their flight. The drunkard, the glutton, and the unclean, degrade the fruits of the land by using them to feed the life of the tenants who dwell in the moral abyss. On the other hand, in the man who strives to live a life of high purpose, pure feeling, and noble thought, the corn is taken into the manhood and shares its elevation. It is that lofty use alone that gives man fulness of enjoyment. There is an unearthly delight in the enjoyment of God's gifts when they are thus exalted. It is still true that God satisfies His people "with the bread of heaven." It is still true that for those who are redeemed to the high life in Christ the Holy Spirit gives them "of the corn of heaven. Man did eat angels' food." Do we seek elevation in Christ Jesus? Are we pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus? Are we sanctifying the fields of our life by subjecting all our energies to the influence of noble aspirations and high purposes in Christ Jesus?

2. The second condition which regulates the enjoyment of the fruits of the land of promise is embodied in this command, "Ye shall offer . . . an he-lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt-offering unto the Lord." What are the moral and spiritual truths embodied in the form of this ordinance? It gives expression to that eternal truth that man cannot enjoy the fruits of God's promised land without innocency of life, and entire surrender of self to God. The highest joys and richest pleasures of existence cannot be experienced by the man whose heart is full of malice and wickedness. Material prosperity, houses, and lands, and gold he may have. But the joy, peace, and satisfaction which feed the inner life of an enriched, ennobled soul are forbidden to all but those who have found truth and innocency of character. The mode of the offering is also expressive of another condition. The lamb was to be offered as a burnt-offering. This form of sacrifice expresses the principle of unreserved dedication of the life to God. The life of self-sacrifice is the happy life. The heart which has given itself unreservedly to the truth and love of God, is the heart that experiences the joys of the promised land.

3. The third condition imposed upon the Israelite was expressed in the command, "The meat-offering thereof shall be two-tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the Lord for a sweet savour; and the drink-offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of an hin." What eternal principle is embodied in the form of this rite? It teaches us that we cannot enjoy the fruits of the promised land until we have learnt to seek the sustenance and gladness of the soul in communion with God. The flour of the meat-offering represents that spiritual bread of the soul which "strengtheneth man's heart." The wine of the drink-offering represents the spiritual flow of joys that "maketh glad the heart of man." The oil is the type of the influence of the Divine Spirit by the virtue of which life-giving efficacy comes to the forms of human service.

III. HOW ARE WE TO FULFIL THE CONDITIONS IMPOSED UPON SOULS IN THIS PASSAGE? How can we practically qualify ourselves to eat the products of the spiritual harvest that grows in the land that God has given to us? The three great principles here set before us are acknowledged in the life of the sincere, worthy communicants in the Church of Christ, "the meet partakers of those holy mysteries." Whenever you approach the Lord's table as the Church commands, you waive the energies of life on high before the Lord, and acknowledge the principle of Divine elevation by answering in obedience to her command, "Lift up your hearts,"—"We lift them up unto the Lord." You acknowledge the eternal obligation of the Divine principle of self-devotion when, after confessing your sins and asking the absolution of Christ, you offer with fervent resolve the service of a life delivered from its blemishes by the redeeming power of the unblemished Lamb, who is the propitiation for our sins, and say, "Here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Thee." You acknowledge the need of Divine sustenance, the principle of the eternal meat-offering, when you hearken to the voice of the Church saying unto you, "Feed on Him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving." If we would be qualified to enjoy all the glorious wealth of Canaan we must live the hidden sacramental life in Christ. (*H. T. Edwards, M.A.*)

Vers. 10, 11. Wave the sheaf.—*The first-fruits*:—The design of these festivals was two-fold: they were eucharistic or commemorative, and they were also typical or prophetic. This ordinance is not a distinct festival, but a ceremony observed during the feast of unleavened bread, as the Paschal Feast is some-

times called, from the fact that during the seven days through which it lasted the children of Israel were commanded to put away leaven out of their houses. It was observed annually with great solemnity. Certain persons were deputed by the Sanhedrin to go out into the fields and procure a sheaf of the newly-ripened corn, which was then carried into the temple preceded by oxen crowned with garlands, and other tokens of national rejoicing. There can be no doubt that this observance had a moral bearing on the people of the time. It was a solemn recognition, on the part of the whole nation, of Him who was "the Lord of the harvest," and an appropriate ascription of praise to Him for His goodness in giving the fruits of the earth in their due season. But we are now to inquire into its typical or Christian import; and—I. Here we have at once a clue IN THE DAY ON WHICH THIS CEREMONY WAS OBSERVED. It was to be waved "on the morrow after the Sabbath," that is, of course, the Jewish Sabbath; or, in other words, it was to be presented on the first day of the week, the Lord's day—the day on which Jesus rose from the dead, and became, as St. Paul says, in evident allusion to the ordinance, "the first-fruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. xv. 20). To this fundamental event, then, the offering of the wave-sheaf refers; it is a type of the resurrection of the Saviour. But there is a farther and more intimate agreement of the day. It was not only the first day of the week, but it was the first day of the same week of the Jewish ecclesiastical year as that on which the Saviour rose. When we refer to the fifteenth and sixteenth verses of this chapter we read an account of the pentecostal feast, and we find that the period of fifty days, from which it derives its name, is reckoned from this very day. II. Let us, then, proceed to examine THE SUITABILITY OF THIS TYPE AND ITS APPLICATION TO THIS IMPORTANT SUBJECT; and—1. The first-fruits hallowed the harvest from whence it was taken. It removed the impediment which stood opposed to its being gathered; the ceremonial impurity, if I may so say, which was attached to it previous to the waving of the sheaf before the Lord, until which time it was unlawful to make use of it. The prohibition on this head was express (ver. 14). There was, then, you perceive, an imputed uncleanness attached to the harvest before the offering of the first-fruits, but which, when the sheaf was presented, was done away; and thus it is written, "he (the priest) shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you" (ver. 11). Now this significantly exhibits the bearing of the Saviour's resurrection upon the justification of His people. The relation that the first-fruits sustained to the harvest the same does Jesus sustain to those that believe in Him—they are the harvest in respect to Him. His resurrection was necessary in order to our justification before God. It is on this the argument of the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians depends. And thus also he writes in another place, He "was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25). Our justification depends on the resurrection of Jesus. You will easily understand this when you call to mind the character in which He died. He was crucified as a sinner, under the imputation of His people's sins; God "made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us," "He laid on Him the iniquity of us all." It were utterly impossible that He should be set free while any portion of the debt He undertook to pay remained undischarged. We know the issue of the trial; His work was amply sufficient to discharge the debt He had taken on Him. In the power of His own essential righteousness He burst asunder the bands of death. The law had no further claim to urge or penalty to exact; and therefore the Saviour had power and right to take His life again. And rising in the character of the accepted offering He became "the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him." He is "waved before the Lord to be accepted for us." 2. The first-fruits was the earnest of the coming harvest. It was a pledge that the harvest would be gathered; that it had escaped all the vicissitudes of the climate and was now ripe for the sickle. And such was the resurrection of the Saviour to His people. He is "the first-fruits of them that slept." The fact that He has risen from the dead secures to us the hope that He shall rise. The resurrection of the Saviour is the guarantee which God has given us of the resurrection of his people. Does any one feel a doubt upon this subject? Does it seem "a thing impossible that God should raise the dead?" We appeal to the fact—the historical fact, established upon evidence which no other fact can boast of, that Jesus is raised from the dead. The faith which realises this fact gives to the soul the blessed persuasion that "He who has raised up the Lord Jesus shall also raise us up by Jesus." Jesus stands to us in the relation of our covenant Head. As by virtue of our connection with the first Adam we are subject to death, so by virtue of our connection with the second Adam we are made par-

takers of His life and immortality which we derive from Him. III. THE SHEAF OF FIRST-FRUIITS WAS A SAMPLE OF THE HARVEST. When the children of Israel looked upon it they beheld a specimen of the crop from whence it was taken and of which it was itself a part. And this reminds us of another light in which we may contemplate the resurrection of our Redeemer, as affording us a sample or specimen of our own. What was resurrection unto Jesus? It was the resuscitation of His dead body, the same body which was laid in the grave. But in what power did He rise? Was it in the power of animal life, such as that with which our mortal bodies are animated—the life of nature—of the flesh? Oh, no, the body of Jesus when it left the grave left it not, as did that of Lazarus, still the subject of weakness and mortality. It arose in the power of immortality, in the energy of the very life of God. It arose the same, and yet another; another, because animated with another life—His own eternal, incorruptible, spiritual life. "He was put to death in the flesh and quickened by the Spirit." Such was the resurrection unto Jesus, and such shall it be also to His people—"For we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him." It had been but a pitiful prospect, that of resurrection, were it merely restoration to such bodies as those which we have now. But, blessed be God, such is not the hope He has set before us—it is one which is "full," not of mortality, but "of immortality" (2 Cor. v. 2). If humanity, in the person of the Saviour, is quickened with the life of God, it is in order that the same life may be imparted to His people. It is even now imparted to the soul. Whenever a sinner believes in Jesus, and by faith is converted to God, there is a resurrection. This faith is the result of the operation of the Spirit of the living God, working in the same manner as when, by His mighty energy, He raised the lifeless body of the Saviour from the dead (Eph. ii. 18-22). And this life shall be hereafter imparted to the body. The same Spirit which has operated on the believer's soul and raised him from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness shall, in the resurrection morning, descend upon the cold remains of his lifeless corpse, and shall animate it with new, with spiritual, everlasting life (Rom. viii. 9-11). Such, then, will be the resurrection of the dead—such is the blessed prospect which is set before the Church of Christ. That which is sown in corruption, in dishonour, in weakness, shall be raised in incorruption, in glory, in power—no longer an impediment to the soul, but the vehicle through which its immortal energies shall be consecrated to the praise and service of the Lord. IV. WHEN THE FIRST-FRUIITS WERE OFFERED THE HARVEST WAS AT HAND; and not only at hand, but also expected and wished for; all thoughts in Israel were now directed to it; the wave-sheaf was the certain indication of its approach. And this reminds us of the position which we should take in regard to the coming of the Lord and the resurrection morning: we should be in the attitude of expectation, of joyous expectation, of "that day." There is something erroneous and unscriptural in our habit of thought upon this subject. We are accustomed to admit the truth of the resurrection, but we do not realise its practical importance, we do not embrace it as a motive for action; it does not exercise a practical and habitual influence upon us. And why? Because we put it at a distance from us; when we think of the subject at all we regard it as something that is to take place at some very remote period of time, before which all that is important to our eternal condition will be necessarily fixed for ever. Hence the little influence which this blessed prospect exercises on our lives. How different the manner in which it is spoken of in the Scriptures! The effect of apostolic preaching was to lead men to "look for" and "hasten unto" the coming of the day of God (2 Pet. iii. 12). In fact, an important feature of Christian character, as described in the New Testament, is the expectation of the coming of the Lord to reap the harvest of the world. (*J. B. Lowe, B.A.*) *The wave-sheaf typical of Christ:*—I. We shall endeavour to show that THIS SHEAF OF THE FIRST-FRUIITS WAS A TYPE OF CHRIST, AS TO THE MATTER OF IT, BOTH IN RESPECT TO QUALITY AND QUANTITY. With respect to quality it was a sheaf of barley, as to its quantity it was a single sheaf, or, however, such a quantity as only one omer of barley was taken from it and waved before the Lord by the priest. Now this being of barley, which is a mean sort of grain, may denote the mean estate of our Lord Jesus Christ in His humiliation. But this sort of grain, though mean, was used for food; so Christ, in His mean estate of humiliation, is suitable food for faith. He is held forth in the everlasting gospel as food for the faith of His people under the character of Christ crucified. So much for the quality of this sheaf of the firstfruits: it was of barley. Next, its quantity. It was but one—one sheaf that was waved—one omer, which was the tenth part of an ephah. It was as much as a man could eat in one day. Christ in many respects

is but one. One with His Divine Father in nature and essence. Christ is one in His person, though He has two natures—human and Divine. This is the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh. “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” Christ is but one in His office as Mediator, the one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, who has interposed between God and man, and made up the breach between them, who is our Peace, and by whom the way is opened for us to God. He is the one Lord, as the apostle says, “One Lord, one faith, one baptism.” He is the only Head of the Church whom the Father has given to be head over all things unto it—a Head of eminence to rule over and guide and protect it. A Head of influence, as the natural head is to the body from which it receives its nourishment and increases. And He is the only Husband of the Church—“Thy Maker is thine Husband, the Lord of Hosts is His name.” Thus in many respects Christ is but one, as this sheaf was. But then, though this sheaf was but one, it had many stalks, many ears of corn, and many grains in it. And so Christ, though He is but one in various respects, as we have seen, yet in Him there is a complication of blessings of grace. Jehovah has presented Him from all eternity in the council and covenant of grace and peace with all the blessings of grace and goodness for His people; He has put them all into His hands, and blessed them with all spiritual blessings in Him. Moreover, He has not only a complication of all blessings in Him; but as this sheaf of the firstfruits represented the whole harvest, and was a pledge and earnest of it, so Christ the Sheaf of the firstfruits represents all His people. They are all gathered together under one head in Him, and when He was crucified they were with Him; when He was buried they were with Him; when He rose again from the dead they rose again with Him; and are now sat down in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. And besides, as the sheaf of the firstfruits had a connection with all the rest, so He with all the people of God. It was for their sakes He suffered, died, and rose from the dead. II. It was so WITH RESPECT TO WHAT WAS DONE UNTO IT AND DONE WITH IT. First it was reaped. And this was done in a very solemn and pompous manner according to the account the Jews give of it, which is this: The messengers of the Sanhedrin went out (from Jerusalem over the brook Kidron to the fields near it) on the evening of the feast, and bound the standing corn in bundles that so it might be more easily reaped, and the inhabitants of all the neighbouring villages gathered together there that it might be reaped in great pomp, and when it was dark, one said to them, “Is it sunset?” They said, “Yes.” “With this sickle shall I reap it?” They said, “Yes.” “In this basket shall I put it?” They said, “Yes.” If on a Sabbath-day he said to them, “On this Sabbath-day shall I do it?” They said, “Yes.” These questions were put and answered three times; then they reaped it, and put it into the basket, and brought it to the court. Now this reaping of the sheaf of firstfruits was an emblem of the apprehending of our Lord Jesus Christ by the Jews, or by officers which they sent to take Him. They attempted it once and again before they accomplished it. We are told in the seventh chapter of John that, “at the Feast of Tabernacles they sought to lay hold of Him; but His time was not yet come.” The very officers were dispirited, and when they were called to an account by the chief priests and Pharisees for not bringing Him they said, “Never man spake like this Man.” They could not take Him. But when the set time was come He was easily apprehended by them. And as we are told they bound the ears of corn, that they might be the more easily reaped, so they bound Christ, and brought Him to the high priest. This was done at night when it was dark. And as the sheaf was reaped by a deputation of men sent by the grand Sanhedrin at Jerusalem, so our Lord was apprehended by officers sent by chief priests and Pharisees, who were assembled together in council as the great Sanhedrin of the nation. Likewise the circumstance of the sheaf of firstfruits being reaped near the brook Kidron exactly agrees with the apprehending of Christ near that brook. When this sheaf was reaped, then it was brought to the court; so Christ, when He was first apprehended, was brought to Annas, then to Caiaphas, then to the court, where, after His arraignment and trial, He was condemned to death. This sheaf being brought to court was threshed, winnowed, dried, and parched by the fire, and ground in a mill, all which set forth in a lively manner the dolorous sufferings of our Lord. The sheaf being threshed was expressive of His being smitten by men, of His being buffeted and scourged by the order of the Roman governor by the soldiers, all in perfect agreement with the prophecy that “they should smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek”; “that He should give His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them which plucked off the hair.” This sheaf of the firstfruits as it was beaten

out so it was dried and parched by the fire, which may be considered as expressive of the wrath of God which Christ endured, which is compared to fire, and by which (as it is expressed in the Psalms concerning Him) "His strength was dried up like a potsherd." It was ground also in a mill (as was the manna, another type of Christ), which was another circumstance that pointed out the sufferings of the Redeemer, who was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. Upon the omer of flour that was taken oil and frankincense were poured, which may denote the acceptableness of Christ in His sufferings, death, and sacrifice to His Divine Father. He gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice unto God for a sweet-smelling savour. And then the waving of this by the priest before the Lord seems to denote His resurrection from the dead. It is also expressive of His connection with His people whom He represented, and whose resurrection is the pledge, earnest, and security of theirs. For as the firstfruits sanctified the rest of their harvest, represented the whole, gave a right to the ingathering of it, and insured it, so our Lord's resurrection from the dead sanctified and secured the resurrection of His people. Because He lives they shall live also, or as sure as His dead body arose, so sure shall theirs rise also. III. WHAT WERE THE CONCOMITANTS OF IT? What accompanied the waving the firstfruits were a burnt-offering and a meat-offering. The first of these was an eminent type of Christ, as all the burnt-offerings were. It was a lamb—a figure of Christ the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. A lamb without blemish—a type of the immaculate Lamb of God. This was a burnt-offering, so a fit emblem of the dolorous sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then there was a meat-offering which always went along with this, which was also typical of Christ. From hence we see the great advantages we receive from Christ. He is the firstfruits, and all our fruit is from Him. And therefore many are the obligations we lay under to give thanks unto His name and not forget His benefits. We ought, through the constraints of His love, to live to Him who died for us. (*John Gill, D.D.*) *Lessons of the harvest*:—It is easy to see the significance of this rite to the Israelites. God was to be associated with everything. No phase of duty or of enjoyment; no enterprise—social, commercial, or aggressive; no festivities to celebrate triumphs over enemies, to mark national progress or prestige, or to rejoice over the reward of industry, but God was to be acknowledged, honoured, and worshipped, His blessing sought, His goodness remembered, His theocratic rule over them extolled. We have had to unlearn much that the Jew taught his posterity, and the world through them; we have outgrown much that was as sacred to the Israelitish nation as the presence of God Himself; the world has had to recast and remould its creeds of the relation of the Divine Father to His human children; but we have not outgrown either the propriety or the necessity of associating God with the government of the world and with the supply of humanity's needs. I. THE BOUNTIFUL KINDNESS OF GOD IN SUPPLYING THE WANTS OF HIS CREATURES. Smatterings of science have a tendency to divorce God from the providential supply of the world's wants. We too commonly think of our daily supplies as the results of physical laws. We say the earth yieldeth her increase; Nature supplieth those things that are necessary for man's sustenance; light and heat, warmth and moisture are the great factors in the world's bounty. Let us grant all that, but who is behind it? To me the supply of the world's daily bread is a standing proof—not only of a self-existent and ever active Deity, but of a Divine Fatherhood—ever thinking, ever acting, ever providing for the wants of all His children. II. THE NECESSARY CONNECTION BETWEEN THE DIVINE BENEVOLENCE AND HUMAN EFFORT. Whatever the Divine rule, whatever the Divine love that broods over this poor earth, making it to yield its fruits in abundance, the world without man would be a vast howling wilderness. It is God plus man that enriches the earth and makes it to bring forth abundantly. And thus it is that toil becomes dignified, that the sweat of labour is God's crown of approval upon the human brow. Every man who is putting God's gifts into such conditions that they become greater gifts; every man who is preparing the soil for the seed and the seed for the soil; every man who by any kind of industry is helping God to fulfil His purposes in making the earth provide for the wants of man, is a servant of God, however low and however humble the man may be. To be idle is to be outside the purpose and economy of God; to be lazy is to be out of harmony with the laws of the universe. III. THE INEVITABLE RELATION BETWEEN THE SEED-TIME AND THE HARVEST. The man who wanted a harvest of wheat knew that to effect such a result he must sow wheat. It is God's law that it should be so. Every harvest is the evolution of some past seed time. Human life and human destiny are evolved, not

by chance, not by miracle, not by the Divine caprice, but by the law of cause and effect, of precedent and consequent. Your present is the outcome of some past ; all the good that you enjoy is the harvest of your own or other's sowing ; your future will be the consequent of this present. Human conduct is the factor of human destiny ; the sowing of time determines the harvest of eternity. (*W. J. Hocking.*)

Vers. 15-17. And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath.—*The Feast of Pentecost*:—We are now to consider that which was properly the second annual festival of the Jewish nation—the Feast of Pentecost. The distinctive ceremony observed upon this day was the presentation of a new meat-offering, in the form of two wave-loaves unto the Lord. These loaves were the first-fruits of wheat harvest, and in allusion to them the feast is sometimes called “ the Feast of Harvest ” (Exod. xxiii. 16), and also “ the day of first-fruits ” (Num. xviii. 26). The moral bearing of this ordinance upon the people was therefore similar to that of the last which we have had presented to our notice ; it was a renewed acknowledgment on their part of the mercies of Jehovah, who had brought them into “ that good land,” and given them the kindly fruits of the earth in their season. And accordingly we find a beautiful form of thanksgiving prescribed for this occasion, in which these mercies were briefly but eloquently celebrated (Deut. xxvi. 1-11). But we are now to examine this festival with the view of discovering its typical and prophetic import ; and this also we must look for in that ordinance which characterised it, and from which, as we have seen, it derived its name, the offering of these two wave-loaves. They were designed to set forth the Church of Christ. Just as the Saviour Himself in resurrection from the dead is typified by the wave-sheaf, the first-fruits of barley harvest (“ the first of the first-fruits ” (Exod. xxxiv. 26), as it is called) ; so also the Church as partaking of His resurrection life—quickened by the Spirit in which He rose from the dead, is represented by the ordinance of the two wave-loaves. As He is “ the first-fruits ” with respect to His people, so they also are by union with Him constituted the first-fruits in reference to that future harvest. Let us, then, enter into detail. I. THERE WAS SOMETHING SIGNIFICANT IN THE DAY ON WHICH THIS OFFERING WAS TO BE PRESENTED. It was on the fiftieth day from that on which the wave-sheaf was offered, or as it is called in the New Testament the day of Pentecost. Now what is the importance of the day of Pentecost to us as Christians ? I answer, it was the commencement of the present dispensation. This is the distinguishing characteristic of the Christian Church—of that Church not merely as distinguished from the world, but also from the Church previous to the day of Pentecost—that she is united to, yea identified with Christ in resurrection (Col. iii. 1, 2). In this new character the Holy Ghost was not given until that Jesus was glorified. As the Spirit of light and life He had been operating on the hearts of all His faithful people from the beginning of the world. But now He operates in increased power, and bestows a higher privilege ; He unites the Church unto Him who is “ waved ” in the character of “ the first-fruits,” that we in Him may also partake of the same character, and become “ the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb (Rev. xiv. 4). And thus it is written, in allusion, I believe, to this very ordinance, “ Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures.” (Jas. i. 28). And this brings me to consider—II. THE ANALOGY BETWEEN THE ORDINANCE BEFORE US, AND THE CHURCH OF WHICH IT IS THE TYPE. This will appear in several interesting particulars, and—1. Is there not something significant in the bipartite character of the type ? It was to consist of two loaves. And surely it is natural to suppose that it was designed to set forth something. Why should the lump be divided into two parts, and not be presented whole ? In order, I would venture to suggest, to set forth the two component parts of the Christian Church—the Jews and Gentiles, both made one in Christ. This is one marked peculiarity of the present dispensation. It was the mystery hidden from ages and generations, but which is now made manifest that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of the same body (Eph. iii. 6). There is, then, you see, a unity, and yet a diversity in the Christian Church ; a unity because it is one Church ; a diversity because it consists of two component parts, the Jew and the Gentile (Eph. ii. 14-18). 2. Another point of analogy, and a farther confirmation of this application of the type, will be suggested if we shall find that the Church of the present dispensation is presented in Scripture to be the first-fruits, or earnest, of future and more enlarged mercies which are yet to come. Whether we consider the converts to the gospel from among the Jews, or those from among the Gentiles, which are made during the present dispensation, we are taught to regard them each

and both together, but as "a kind of first-fruits of His creatures" (Eph. i. 10). And first, with regard to the Jews, I would refer you to the testimony which is borne to this effect in the Epistle to the Romans (Rom. xi. 1-5). And what is this result? Is it the conversion of the whole nation? No, as a nation, Israel is for the present rejected; but we are to expect that there will be an election from among them, "a remnant according to the election of grace"; and no more than this. But is Israel as a nation to be for ever cast away? Do God's purposes of mercy reach no farther than the gathering of this remnant? Far otherwise the view that the apostle gives us in this chapter (Rom. xi. 12, 15). Here we are expressly taught to look for a period when the mercies of God will no longer be confined to "a remnant" from among them as now, but when they shall all, in their fulness, be received again into the favour of God. So far, then, as regards the Jews; let us now see how far the same holds good as respects the Gentiles. And here I shall again confine myself to one passage. In the fifteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, when St. James, who presided at the council, is recorded to have spoken as follows:—"Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name." Here you see is the idea entertained by the apostles of the purposes of God towards the Gentiles in the present dispensation. 3. The first-fruits were considered to be the property of God—peculiarly His, claimed by Him, and set apart for His own. And is not this also true in regard to His Church? Has He not chosen it to Himself, and made it His own in a peculiar sense above all other things? The universe belongs to Him, the beasts of the forest are His; but the Lord's portion are His people, Judah is the lot of His inheritance, "a chosen generation, and holy nation, a peculiar people" (1. Pet. ii. 9). As far as God has revealed His mind towards His creatures, we know of nothing in the whole universe so precious to Him as His Church. Angels in this respect cannot compare with us. Humanity is in Christ united to the God-head, and therefore stands of a pinnacle far above all other created things (Eph. v. 30). My brethren, it is not a mere salvation which we have in Jesus. Oh! no, it is much more than salvation, than deliverance, than restoration; it is identification with the Son of His love, who has come down to us to take us up to Him, that we may be "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. i. 3). But if this speaks to us of privileges it speaks also of duty. My brethren, consider what it is to be the property of God. Just as the first-fruits were by His own command set apart unto Himself, and given into the hands of His appointed priest to be waved before Him, so it is with the Church. We are His by covenant arrangement, we are given by Him unto the great High Priest—"Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me" (John xvii. 6). And why are we thus given unto Him? in order that He may save us? deliver us from wrath? Oh! yes, but that we may by Him be consecrated unto the service and glory of our God, that we may be His, in time and in eternity. And this brings me to observe—4. The peculiar character of this offering. It was a wave-offering. And there is something significant in this, the wave sheaf, you remember, set forth the Saviour Himself in resurrection; and so when the Church is represented in the wave-loaves, there can be no doubt that it is intended to exhibit her in this character, as "risen together" with Him. As then the characteristic last referred to set forth the dedication of the Church to God, her consecration to His service; so this which I now speak of, is designed to remind us of the power in which we are to be thus consecrated—the power of resurrection-life. The apostle supposes the objection brought against the gospel of the grace of God which so often meet with in the present day, that it tends to antinomianism. "What, then, shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" (Rom. vi. 1), and how does he reply? "God forbid; how shall we who are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Here you see the Christian is described as one that is dead to sin; and how is that? "Know ye not that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? wherefore we are buried with Him by baptism unto death? that like as Christ is raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Such, then, you perceive, is practical Christianity. If you want a sample of the life in which we ought to walk, you are to contemplate the risen Saviour: this is the standard which the Scriptures put before us. 5. The next particular to which I would refer is the injunction in the sixteenth verse, "They shall be baken with leaven." There is a beautiful significance in this; the leaven, we know, is a type of the flesh—of nature—of the old man, and when it is directed that it should be mingled with

this offering, it appears, at first sight, extraordinary. Why should that which is thus dedicated to God be thus defiled? There is something significant in this: there was no leaven mingled with the sheaf of corn which was waved on the second day of unleavened bread, because it was a type of Him in whom was no sin; but it is otherwise in regard to that which is designed to represent His people; they would not be perfectly exhibited if there was not this memorial. It is true that they are raised from the death of sin; but it is also true that "the old man" does still remain in them, and, by the taint and infection of the flesh, pollutes their every service, and brings them in still as miserable sinners before God. Here, then, we have an accurate view of the present character of the Church of Christ; animated, indeed, with new, with spiritual life, yet still encompassed with the infirmity, and impeded by the opposition of the flesh. And, accordingly, it is important to observe there is a sin-offering expressly enjoined to be offered with the two wave loaves (ver. 19). This is a remarkable instance of that minuteness with which these types are regulated, and more particularly when it is observed that there was no sin-offering to be made when the sheaf of firstfruits was presented. Oh! beloved, do you feel the virus of the flesh? Are you conscious of its perpetual pressure? Behold, here is the provision He has made to meet your anguish (Heb. x. 22). 6. But lastly, let us always bear in mind the view which this ordinance gives us of the Church as the firstfruits of God's mercies towards the world at large. The infidel taunts us with the little that the gospel has accomplished, and maintains that Christianity has proved a failure; and truly if, as is supposed by some, the Scriptures held out the expectation that the gospel was to go on gradually extending, until the world was evangelised, there were some appearance of reason in the imputation. Let us ever bear in mind we have an earnest of a glorious harvest which is yet to come. As surely as the firstfruits are now waved in His presence, so surely shall the harvest be gathered into His garner. (*J. B. Lowe, B.A.*)

Ver. 22. Not make clean riddance.—Gleaning:—The benevolent provision made in our text for the poor and stranger proclaims its author: even God, whose tender mercies are over all His works, who is the Friend of the friendless, and has enjoined that even fragments are to be gathered, that nothing may be lost. I. LET SUCH AS HAVE FIELDS TO GLEAN PAY ATTENTION TO THE LETTER AND THE SPIRIT OF THIS INJUNCTION, TOGETHER WITH THE MOTIVE ON WHICH OBEDIENCE IS ENFORCED. 1. The letter of this benevolent precept establishes the propriety of permitting persons to glean in your lands; but it does not prohibit clearing your fields of all the sheaves, and carrying them not only to a place of safety, but out of the way of temptation to the gleaners. Is not this evidently implied in the following explanatory directions of the law (Dent. xxiv. 19), where not taking away the entire crop is imputed to inadvertence, rather than intention. Neither does it forbid the judicious exercise of this permission as to the persons who may glean, as is clear from the history of Ruth. It rested with the proprietor or occupier of the land to grant or deny the privilege to certain individuals. Yet the command strictly enjoins the duty of leaving what is not thus carried for the poor and strangers, and frowns on the inhuman and selfish practice of turning cattle of any description into the fields until some reasonable time for the gleaning has been allowed to elapse. In some foreign countries the law specifies twenty-four hours after the crop has been carted, but circumstances and conscience must decide for each farmer. 2. We have, however, less to do with the letter than the spirit of this precept. Does it not breathe kindness to the poor, pity to the needy, and cherish the disposition to let fall purposely a few ears of corn rather than collect all with extreme exactitude? Right too rigid, hardens into wrong. The sentiment of this direction should transfuse itself into every part of our conduct, and pervade all our transactions with the poor. 3. The motive subjoined for your obedience: "I am the Lord your God"—God, who raiseth up one and putteth down another, who maketh the rich and the poor, who has borne with your ingratitude and rebellion, and who has, notwithstanding, given you another and an abundant crop—yes, He is your God whom you profess to obey, and whose authority you wish to regard. 4. Recollect that to obedience is the reward annexed (Dent. xxiv. 19). II. ADVICE TO SUCH AS ARE GLEANERS. Remember that God, who has ordained this permission, and guarded it by His command, must be honoured by you in the enjoyment. 1. Unless you are poor, you neither might nor would glean: let me then guard you against those snares which always attend poverty. It is a temptation, when afar from human notice, to defraud: "lest I be poor and steal." Forget not the old proverb, "He that will steal a pin, will steal a greater thing." When

opportunity and importunity press, the hand that loosed the band of a sheaf will not forbear to break through the barn and steal. 2. You go into the fields to glean: then do not idle away your time, or what was intended for your good will be an injury to you. 3. Persons generally glean in numbers; then pray avoid bad company and they will soon avoid you. Like always associates with its like—lions with lions, sheep with sheep—a man may be known by the company he keeps. Choose society in your work who will do you good rather than harm; better conversation will cheer you under the heat of the sun and the toil of out-door work, to which you may perhaps not be accustomed. 4. Let me caution you also against what is too common on these occasions—immodest behaviour. Indecent language and coarse manners are disgraceful and dangerous. Use your authority to prevent your children seeing or hearing what is so wrong and easily learnt and but seldom forgotten. 5. It is mentioned to the praise of a most excellent daughter and industrious but poor female that she came home early from gleaning. Be not the last to leave the fields; late hours in every station of life are injurious; works of darkness are always suspicious, often criminal. "Many love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." 6. I wish you to notice that the Scriptures say that the stranger may glean. In some places the poor will not permit this. Are they right? Does not the same verse which permits you allow them? Moreover, perhaps your children, or remoter descendants, may be cast where they are not known, and have no settlement; and often God retributes in this life; as we have done to others He allows or disposes others to deal with us. Lessons: 1. From the whole of this subject, primarily, let us learn our obligation to God for His invaluable Word—a standard of unerring rectitude, and wherein is contained every thing necessary for life and godliness. 2. We may infer that if God has condescended to regulate smaller concerns, He will not overlook greater matters. Has He thus cared for your bodies and temporal interests, and will He be less provident about your immortal spirits? 3. Let us remember that the evening of our life draweth on; when, as she who gleaned in the fields of Boaz returned to her inquiring parent and reported her success, we shall return to the dust from whence we sprang; and must say to corruption, Thou art my mother. It shall then be asked of us, Where have ye gleaned to-day? where wroughtest thou? What reply shall we make? (*W. Clayton.*)

Vers. 23-25. **A memorial of blowing of trumpets.**—*The Feast of Trumpets*:—The ordinance of the trumpets occupied a conspicuous part in the Jewish ceremonial; and when we consider the various particulars which were prescribed regarding them, and the purposes to which they were applied, we cannot but feel that they were intended to convey some instructive lesson. We have an account of their first appointment in the tenth chapter of the Book of Numbers, vers. 1-10. Here the following particulars deserve to be noted: 1. That these trumpets were made at the express command of God, who also enjoined—2. The manner in which they were to be formed—"of one piece"; and 3. The purposes to which they were to be applied, viz.—(1) For the calling of assemblies. (2) The journeys of the camp. (3) To sound an alarm in the time of danger. (4) On new moons and festal occasions, when they were to be blown over the sacrifices. In addition to the occasions here enumerated, there was also to be celebrated an anniversary of the blowing of trumpets, on the first day of the seventh month, which on this account was called the Feast of Trumpets—the third of these solemn annual festivals, which we are endeavouring to illustrate. In considering, then, this ordinance, we shall divide our observations into three heads; under the first, we shall examine its commemorative bearing; under the second, its application to the present dispensation; and under the third, its prospective or prophetic reference to things which are to come. I. **FOR ITS COMMEMORATIVE BEARING**, I would refer to the nineteenth chapter of the Book of Exodus, where we have an account of the manner in which the Lord summoned the children of Israel to meet Him on Mount Sinai. Here we find the first mention of the trumpet; when God Himself appoints it as a sign by which the people should know when to approach the mount. "When the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount" (Exod. xix. 13). And so we read (Exod. xix. 16). And again (Exod. xix. 19). This may be regarded as the source from whence the ordinance of trumpets originated. This was the voice of God calling them into covenant with Himself. Thus, then, whenever the people heard the sacred trumpets, they recognised, as it were, the voice of God. At His voice they marched or halted; at His voice they mustered to oppose their enemies; at His voice they assembled on their festal days. And

we have here, doubtless, the commemorative or retrospective bearing of the feast before us. The time when it was celebrated, the new moon symbolising the commencement of the Jewish Church in the wilderness; the trumpet summoning them to "an holy convocation," recalling the assemblage gathered around Mount Sinai; the command, "Thou shalt do no servile work therein," commemorating their deliverance from Egyptian bondage; and finally, the injunction, "Ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord," reminding them that the purpose for which God had made them His people, was in order that (what in Egypt they were not allowed to do) they might sacrifice unto the Lord their God. Such, I venture to suggest, is the retrospective import of this feast—such was its national application; and I am confirmed in the impression by the reference made to it in the eighty-first Psalm, where we find it mentioned in connection with the deliverance from the land of Egypt—"Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast-day" (Psa. lxxxi. 3-10). II. WE PROCEED, THEN, TO EXAMINE ITS APPLICATION TO THE PRESENT DISPENSATION, WHICH CAN BE TRACED IN SEVERAL PARTICULARS. 1. The trumpet was, as we have seen, the voice of a covenant God, calling His people to assemble round the sacrifices; a lively emblem is this of the gospel of Jesus—the voice of "Him that speaks from heaven" (Heb. xii. 18-24). Jesus has ascended up on high, and sits upon the mount of God; and thence by the gospel-trump He sends forth His invitation, the call of His grace, to bring His people nigh. It is His voice, His call, summoning us into covenant with God. This dispensation is emphatically "the day of the blowing of trumpets—the day of holy convocation." This is the mystery of the silver trumpets, they represent the gospel of Jesus. The command to make them, the manner in which they were to be made, and the material of which they were to be constructed, were all of God, all ordained by Him. And so with the gospel; it is all of God from beginning to end. His love suggested, and His wisdom has contrived it; and woe be to him that dares to add to, or to take from it. We must take it as He has given it; if we presume to alter, we mar and spoil it. God alone is competent to know what note will strike with effect upon the sinner's ear, and vibrate upon the sinner's soul. He has constructed the trumpet so as to give that sound which the heart of man requires; and that sound is grace—"the gospel of the grace of God." But there are several other circumstances connected with this ordinance which have much significance in their application. Thus we remember—2. That the trumpets were ordered to be sounded over the sacrifices: the victims were first slain, and then the trumpets sounded over them. And thus with the gospel trumpet; it proclaims a finished work. It re-echoes the dying cry of the Redeemer, announcing that the work is done, the price is paid, the ransom is accepted. It bids not the sinner attempt some great thing for himself. 3. On the Feast of Trumpets no servile work was to be done, but they were to offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord (ver. 25). This reminded the children of Israel of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and separation unto the service of the Lord. Does not the gospel deliver us from servile work, and consecrate us to the service of the Lord? From captivity the gospel has delivered us, for it has come with power to our hearts. But while the children of Israel were on this day to do no servile work, they were not to be without employment—they were "to offer a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord." And thus the same gospel which makes us "free from sin," makes us also "servants of God"; we have no more to say with servile work, we are consecrated henceforth a "royal priesthood," to offer sacrifices unto the Lord our God. III. BUT THIS FESTIVAL ALSO LOOKS FORWARD TO THINGS THAT ARE YET TO COME. The trumpets were to be blown on the first day of every month, and this was the seventh month, the seventh time of the sounding of the trumpets on which the feast was to be celebrated. The number seven, as we know, implying the consummation, brings us on unto "the dispensation of the fulness of times"—"the times of the restitution of all things, spoken of by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began." And accordingly, perhaps in reference to this very ordinance, we find in the Book of Revelation, that the destinies of the age are comprised in a book sealed with seven seals, and the events of this seventh seal are ushered in, successively, by the sound of seven trumpets (Rev. x. 1-7; xi. 15-20). Such are the events which take place at the blowing of the seventh trumpet. The whole may be confined under three heads: The restoration of Israel—The destruction of the apostate nations, and—The glorification of His people. Then, too, shall be the day of perfect service, of perpetual service; when the promise shall be fulfilled, "His servants shall serve Him." Oh! what an offering will then be offered—"an

offering made by fire unto the Lord." "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance." (*J. B. Lowe, B.A.*)

Vers. 26-32. For it is a day of atonement.—*The Day of Atonement*:—The seventh month was one peculiarly distinguished in the Jewish year, no less than three of the annual festivals being assigned to it. On the first day was the Feast of Trumpets, on the fifteenth the Feast of Tabernacles, and on the tenth was the Day of Atonement. We propose to consider it under two heads: first, in its application to the Jews, and second, in its application to ourselves. I. THIS ORDINANCE DIFFERS FROM THE REST IN THIS RESPECT—THAT IT DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE HAD ANY COMMEMORATIVE, OR EUCHARISTIC IMPORT; IT WAS, INDEED, A FAST RATHER THAN A FESTIVAL OR FEAST; it was a solemn day of humiliation before God, national humiliation, on which the people were called to an acknowledgment of their sins, and by the sprinkling of the blood of the slain sacrifice, were reminded at once of the judgment which their sins demanded, and of the only remedy which was provided for them. It was calculated to teach a most important lesson, and leave a deep moral impression upon the national mind. But I cannot but think that this ordinance had also a prophetic bearing upon the Jewish people; that, in common with the two other festivals of the seventh month, it was designed to shadow forth the future dealings of the Lord with them, and that it will have its accomplishment in that day when they shall, as a nation, be brought to repentance for their sins, and faith in the blood of the Lamb. II. When we come to examine more minutely into THE CEREMONIES OBSERVED ON THIS DAY, WE SHALL FIND THAT THEY WERE TYPICAL OF THE GOSPEL SCHEME; and indeed, they present us with one of the most remarkable types contained in the Scriptures. These ceremonies are not mentioned in the chapter before us, but in the sixteenth chapter of this book they are detailed at length. Abstracting what was personal to the high priest himself, let us consider that part which concerned the people at large; and—1. The offerings are to be considered, and in the first instance the sin-offering. This consisted of two goats, for although only one of them was to be slain, they are evidently to be considered as one offering, and indeed are spoken of as such—"two kids of the goats for a sin-offering." These two combined, then, represent the Saviour in death and life. Both were necessary; Jesus saves us by His life as well as by His death. A similar type to this we have in the ceremony of the cleansing of the leper, where two birds were provided, one of which was to be slain over running water, and the other, after being dipped into the water and blood, and used to sprinkle the leper, was afterwards let loose into the open field (chap. xiv. 1-32). We do not sufficiently dwell upon the life of Jesus, and yet it is this life which saves us (Rom. v. 10). But that which was peculiarly characteristic of this day was—2. The entrance of the high priest within the veil. And what a beautiful illustration have we here of the office which our Redeemer now sustains—the part which He now acts for us. Beloved, "we have a great High Priest, who has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God." And for what purpose is He there? On whose behalf does He officiate? Let the reply be given in the language of the Holy Ghost—"now to appear in the presence of God for us." Oh! let the words be treasured in our hearts—"for us." Unto them belonged the sons of Aaron; unto us belongs the Son of God. If Jesus has passed into the most Holy Place, He has entered there in a public character, as the representative of His people, and every part of the ministry which He sustains in all for them. When the high priest went within the veil he had a defined work to do; he undertook no vague, uncertain commission; the object for which he went, and the results of his meditation were clearly laid down and defined. It was for the chosen people that he ministered, for them he was ordained "in things pertaining unto God"—to make reconciliation for the sins of the people was the task assigned him. And accordingly he carried the names of the twelve tribes upon his shoulders, and upon his breast. And so with our great High Priest; there is no uncertainty in his work, it is all explicitly defined, ordered, and settled by covenant arrangement. But He bears them also in His breast; it is not merely a matter of compact, of official duty, it is a matter of affection and friendship. "He careth for" us! 3. But when the high priest passed within the veil, he entered "not without blood." He was commanded to carry with him the blood of the sin-offering, and to dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle it before the mercy-seat (chap. xvi. 14-16). Just so, our "great High Priest," "not by the blood of bulls and of goats, but by His own blood, He has entered

in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. ix. 12). The blood of the sin-offering was commanded to be sprinkled seven times before the mercy-seat, denoting the perfection and completeness of that atonement which it typified. Beloved, we are here reminded of a most important truth, the inherent efficacy of the blood of Jesus to atone for sin. 4. But there is something more which the high priest was commanded to do within the veil, which we must not forget to notice. He was to take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and he was to fill his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and to bring it within the veil. And then, when there, he was to sprinkle the incense upon the coals of fire before the Lord, that the smoke of the incense might ascend and cover the mercy-seat (chap. xvi. 12, 13). What a beautiful type have we here of the intercession of our glorious High Priest, ascending as sweet incense perpetually before God! The fire, too, with which this incense was kindled must not be common fire, it must be taken from off the altar of burnt-offering, reminding us of the ground of the Saviour's intercession—His consecration of Himself to do His Father's will; His self-sacrifice upon the Cross to be consumed by the fire of Jehovah's justice as the sinner's Substitute. Oh! beloved, if we have not fellowship with our God in Christ, if we have not peace of mind and conscience, it is not that He has not opened unto us the bosom of His love; but it is because of our hardness of heart, and want of confidence in His mercy. We are not straitened in Him, but in ourselves. 5. But the whole of the duties of the high priest upon this solemn day were not conducted within the veil; he must come forth again to accomplish the service which awaited him outside. And the people, in the meantime, were expecting his return; "they were waiting for him to reappear and complete the work allotted to the day." And here again we are reminded of the position which the Church of Christ should occupy in the present dispensation—waiting for the reappearing of her Lord—"looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ." For as the ceremonies of the Day of Atonement were not completed inside the veil, so is it with the work of our great High Priest; His ministry in heaven will not accomplish all—there is a work outside the veil which He must come forth to do; and those who are interested in the one are interested also in the other (Heb. ix. 27, 28). When the high priest came forth from the sanctuary, and appeared again unto the people, he first dispatched the scapegoat bearing all their iniquities into the wilderness, and then united with them in offering the burnt-offering unto the Lord. And such shall be the results of the second advent of our Saviour. Then shall sin be completely put away, and every trace of it removed for ever. And then, too, shall Jesus and His people unite to offer the burnt-offering unto God. Then in the midst of His redeemed He shall sum up all their pure and holy service; and, blessed and consecrated by the presence of incarnate Godhead, the untiring energies of redeemed humanity shall be for ever consuming, yet unconsumed, upon the altar of eternal love. (*J. B. Lowe, B.A.*)

Vers. 34-42. **The Feast of Tabernacles.**—*The Feast of Tabernacles*:—I. IT WAS A PROTRACTED RELIGIOUS MEETING. II. IT WAS A THANKSGIVING FOR GOD'S BOUNTY IN A COMPLETED HARVEST. III. IT WAS A COMMEMORATION OF MERCIES ATTEMPERING HARDSHIPS AND DANGERS. IV. IT WAS AN EXPRESSION OF THE JOYFUL SIDE OF RELIGION. V. IT WAS A TYPE OF A GREATER FEAST NOW PREPARING FOR ALL GOD'S TRUE PEOPLE. (*H. M. Grout, D.D.*) *The Feast of Tabernacles*:—The three distinguishing features of this feast were the dwelling in booths, the offerings, the festivities. The first served to vividly recall their forty years of pilgrimage; the second—a sacrifice of bullocks, rams, and lambs, with the accompanying flour and drink-offerings—was, as usual, a recognition of God's demands and a plain, willing answer on their part to whom He had given everything; but the third—the universal hilarity and religious cheerfulness—was its chief characteristic. Very naturally, in the time of Christ this latter purpose had been more than fulfilled. Many additions had been made by the Rabbis. Ceremonials most august then, and which gave occasion to two of His most blessed utterances—the pouring of the water from Siloam and the brilliant illumination of the Temple—were not in the Mosaic instructions. Prescriptions as to the style and workmanship of the booths; as to the kind, bearing, and disposition of the boughs; as to the order of procession and chanting of psalms, had made the feast quite a different affair from its original form. Each and all, however, were devised to impress upon both actor and beholder the happy condition and fortune of the Lord's people. I. THE TRUE SERVANT IS GLAD IN REVIEWING GOD'S DEALINGS

WITH HIM. Happiness is always involved in the simple doing of the will of God, now no less than in Eden. It is awakened, too, by occasional and sober review of His guidance and care. No life has much symmetry which neglects this. Way-marks, inscribed "Remember" were set up all along the course of Israel's journey. Their law-givers and leaders were often enjoining it. The backward look was quite as profitable as the forward to encourage and arouse. Faith would increase that no ill could betide them in the future. And the leafy bowers under which they now camped must vividly reproduce the days when such hasty coverings were all they had, and yet were ample for shelter. The fair roofs of the town were no more sufficient protection in the pilgrimage they were making upon the earth. Whether in the desert or behind lofty and massive walls of the defenced city, they should alike be heard exulting: "The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand: the sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night." So, as we turn aside into the frail retreat built on any housetop, in any chamber, and there calmly retrace the course along which the Lord has led us, there is the well-remembered hour when He broke the chains which held us to the world's claims, ideas, and rewards, and bade us set forth with all we had toward the better land. What revelations of His power and compassion were given then! How did He bring us into straits, and open, as we advanced, a way from peril of which no hint had been given, and how did we vow never to doubt His wisdom more! With what strange but wholesome truths, fresh every morning, did He feed and sustain us!

II. THE TRUE SERVANT IS GLAD IN SEEING GOD'S PRESENT CARE FOR HIM. The Jew must not then fail to show his delight, whatever his station or purse. At the meal which followed the free-will offerings, the poor, the stranger, the Levite, were welcome guests. Equality of supply and fortune had for the time its graceful illustration then, as among those wearing the wedding garment, in the parable of the Christ. So may we all alike think of ourselves as having one precious inheritance and provision. Rightly it has been said: "It is a sin not to be happy," for gloominess is a reflection upon the Christ. Our Christianity cannot hope to dominate the world till it shall have shown itself possessed of the secret of happiness. Laments and groans never won a sinner to a service which would chiefly voice itself in them. Through all the scale, from the poverty of the God-fearing Waldensian peasant to the popular, artistic life of the great composer Haydn, there have always been some whose hearts respond to his words, as the string of the piano to its kindred tone: "When I think upon God, my heart is so full of joy that the notes dance and leap, as it were, from my pen; and since God has given me a cheerful heart, why should I not praise Him with a cheerful spirit?"

III. THE TRUE SERVANT IS GLAD IN BEHOLDING GOD'S FUTURE PROVISIONS FOR HIM. The temporary resting beneath green boughs of palm and willow and myrtle; the holiday scene in which life lost something of its pressure and sternness, did but symbolise the days when even such protection would not be needed in the country beyond the Jordan. That way lay Canaan, of which this earthly land flowing with milk and honey was but a faint type. This side the river, too, every devout soul filled with the hope of Israel found, in victories and progress already gained, the pledge of a surpassing joy and glory in the near future. Messiah might appear any hour, and with Him all that could satisfy a longing heart or nation. The unattained, if believed to be attainable, has vast power of inspiration. None can tell what great occasions may come any moment to the ready, watchful servant of God. He may be given to speak the word which shall determine whether the philosophy of the age shall be atheistic or not. Some mighty reform may be waiting his voice or deed, some striking answer to prayer, some raising of a sanctuary whence shall proceed influences to regenerate remotest peoples. The precious abiding word, the present Saviour, the enduring Church, the unfolding kingdom, are His inalienably. They grow richer, plainer, more certain. Yet, compared to the freedom and splendour of the future life, this, with all its joy and liberty, is but as a jungle, through whose tangle and heavy marsh and sudden dangers one struggles on, seeing in the distance the open spaces and lofty arches of the wood, and beyond, the fair greensward where the sunlight falls and flowers bloom and noble mansions stand—his own henceforth. So bright and dazzling was the temple of Diana, that the door-keeper always cried to them that entered: "Take heed to your eyes." A full disclosure of all God has provided for them that love Him would quench mortal sense. Celestial organs only are fitted for celestial scenes. (*De Witt S. Clark.*) *The Feast of Tabernacles*:—I. THE TIME AND MANNER OF ITS OBSERVANCE. 1. The time (ver. 34). Five days after the Day of Atonement. 2. The manner (vers. 35, 36, 40-43). (1) The duty and privi-

lege of assembling for Divine worship. (2) The duty and privilege of being joyous in our recognition of God's care. II. ITS TYPICAL MEANING. 1. The reality of deliverance from sin. 2. The joy of deliverance from sin. 3. The assurance of God's care over all whom He delivers from sin. Lessons: 1. The value of memorial days. 2. The duty of gratitude. 3. The eternal blessedness of the feast of tabernacles awaiting God's children in the land of final deliverance. (*D. C. Hughes, M.A.*) *The Feast of Tabernacles*:—This festival derived its name from the fact that during the first seven days for which it lasted, the children of Israel went out of their habitations, and dwelt in booths or tabernacles, until the eighth day, when they returned unto their houses. It was also called the Feast of Ingathering, because it was celebrated after all the fruits of the land were gathered in, as we learn in the thirty-ninth verse of the chapter before us. This festival, like the rest, was partly commemorative, and partly prophetic or typical; like them we shall find that it exhibits things past, present, and to come. I. IT HAD A COMMEMORATIVE OR EUCHARISTIC MEANING; IT WAS DESIGNED TO CELEBRATE THE MERCY OF THE LORD IN BRINGING THE NATION SAFELY THROUGH THE WILDERNESS, AND GIVING THEM POSSESSION OF THE PROMISED LAND. The journey through the wilderness was celebrated when they went out of their habitations, and the whole nation, leaving their settled dwelling-places, dwelt in tents or tabernacles throughout the land. And the happy termination of their wanderings was also celebrated in this festival, for on the eighth day, when they returned to their habitations, they were to have "an holy convocation," "they were to do no servile work therein," but they were to keep "a Sabbath unto the Lord" (vers. 36, 39). It was a season of national rejoicing, as the ordinance that preceded it had been one of humiliation and mourning. Such was the eucharistic bearing of this ordinance, upon which we need not farther dwell; I will only observe, that in this view of its import we can see a propriety in the season at which it was celebrated—after they had gathered in all the fruits of the earth; a suitable occasion this on which to commemorate the goodness of the Lord. II. But I believe the Jewish application of this feast is not only retrospective, BUT PROSPECTIVE ALSO—THAT IT WAS DESIGNED TO EXHIBIT IN TYPICAL REPRESENTATION THAT WHICH WE SO OFTEN READ OF IN ORAL PREDICTIONS, THEIR FINAL SETTLEMENT IN THE PROMISED LAND, AND COMPLETE CONVERSION UNTO GOD. We are led to expect such a reference from the analogy of the two preceding festivals of this month—the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement—both of which refer to God's purposes of future mercy to the Jewish nation. The Feast of Trumpets referred more particularly to their gathering together from all the countries in which they are scattered, and their restoration to the land of Israel. The Day of Atonement exhibited their conversion unto God after their restoration, when He shall "take away the stony heart, and give them hearts of flesh," and "they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced and mourn for Him." And now we have the Feast of Tabernacles which crowns the whole, and represents, as I believe, their final settlement in the peaceful and happy enjoyment of the land of promise. It would appear that the Jews themselves had some idea that this festival was designed to set forth the future mercies which the nation were to receive at the hands of the promised Messiah. It was customary at the celebration of it to make the compass of the sacrifices, bearing the branches of palm-trees and other goodly trees in their hands; and as they thus went on in joyful procession, they sang the twenty-fifth verse of the hundred and eighteenth Psalm, "Save now [Hosanna], I beseech Thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech Thee, send now prosperity"; and on the seventh day they compassed the altar seven times, singing in like manner, and this was called the Great Hosanna. III. But the typical import of this festival belongs not merely to the Jews; it also, in common with the rest, APPLIES UNTO THE CHURCH OF THIS DISPENSATION, BOTH IN ITS PRESENT CHARACTER AND FUTURE GLORY. The eighth day, which, as we have seen, shadows forth the time of Judah's salvation, and of consequent earthly blessedness, refers also to heavenly and eternal things. It is the first day of a new week, and therefore reminds us of resurrection; and coming at the end of the complete period of seven days, it brings us to the day when "time shall be no longer"—the eternal day of resurrection glory. And to the Church this day shall commence when the kingdom of God is established in the world. Let us endeavour, then, to trace the type in the several particulars of its application; and—1. On the first day there was a holy convocation, and the children of Israel went forth from their houses, and made them tents to dwell in. Just realise the scene; all the families of Israel leaving their houses, giving up their employments, and devoting themselves to the service of the

Lord. So it is with the Church of Christ, the heir of promised glory. Beloved, the gospel calls us out from this evil world, and makes us strangers and pilgrims here. The gospel finds our intellects clogged with the filth of earthliness, our mind and thought concentrated upon the pursuits and occupations of this life—"the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things"; and it disentangles us from the meshes of worldliness; it fills them with the glorious realities of eternity. It assembles us, as it were, in holy convocation, to offer sacrifices unto the Lord. Just as the children of Israel dwelt in tabernacles during seven days, looking forward to the eighth day when they were to enter into rest, so it is with the Israel of God; the Church is a stranger here, looking forward to the day of coming rest. 2. But this was a feast of joy; when the children of Israel throughout the land were to "rejoice before the Lord" they cut down the branches of palm-trees, and of other goodly trees, and carried them throughout all their coasts, in token of triumphant joy. And so with those whom God has called "out of their habitations," they are called to rejoice before the Lord. If the gospel has called us out from this world, it is that it may open to us springs of never-failing joy of which the world knows nothing, which it can never give, and can never take away. They do greatly err who imagine that religion cuts off all our present happiness. But mark, if we would taste the joy we must come "out of our habitations": if we would wave the palm of triumph in the land, we must dwell as strangers there. This joy is not "as the world gives," nor is it founded upon earthly things, and therefore if we keep the feast, it must be the Feast of Tabernacles; if we would rejoice before the Lord, it must be in the position of those who are looking forward to their rest. Observe, too, these palms are the emblems of victory—the symbols of triumphant joy. The rejoicing Christian will ever be in the attitude of the conqueror, always conflicting indeed, but not overcome in the conflict against "the devil, the world and the flesh." The character of the Christian, as described in Scripture, is that of the victor—of one who is evermore victorious, overcoming "by the blood of the Lamb." 3. But the great day of the feast was the eighth day, the type of rest in resurrection glory. On this day the children of Israel struck their tents, and rested again in their habitations; on this day they drew the water from Siloam, and watered therewith the sacrifices, with songs of joy; on this day the priests made the compass of the altar seven times, bearing with them the branches of palm-trees, and of other goodly trees, and singing as they went, "Hosanna in the highest." So shall it be with the Church of Christ in that great day—the sun whereof shall never set in darkness—the everlasting day. Then "the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." Then the mystery of the water which was poured upon the sacrifices shall be fulfilled, when He who is the Alpha and the Omega, shall proclaim, "It is done. I will give to him that is athirst to drink of the water of life freely." Then He who at the Feast of Tabernacles invited sinners to come to Him and drink, shall lead His redeemed people by living fountains of waters, and make them drink of the river of His pleasures. Then, too, the symbol of the palm branches shall be accomplished in the final victory of the redeemed over Death and Hades; and they shall realise the blessed fulfilment of the promise, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things." (*J. B. Lowe, B.A.*) *The Feast of Tabernacles (a New Year's sermon)*:—I. LET US OBSERVE THIS SEASON AS A FEAST OF THANKSGIVING. Review the mercies of the past year—of all your past life. 1. There are the common blessings, enjoyed by all, of continued life and unceasing bodily sustenance. Then we have had houses and raiment. Most have been favoured with good health, and with all the happiness of good credit and friendly intercourse. As Englishmen, we have cause for thankfulness in our civil rights and political privileges, and our present exemption from war. As Christians, we have enjoyed every advantage that could be devised for our spiritual edification and Scriptural instruction. 2. Then there are special benefits, which individuals have received in particular experiences or exigencies. One man has been singularly prospered in his business or profession, another rejoices in the advancing respectability of his children. Perhaps an additional arrow has been given to the quiver, or the feeble child has been made strong, the dissolute one has been reclaimed, or the absent one restored. 3. Then there are spiritual mercies, such as the joy of conversion, succour in temptation and trouble, triumph and progress in labours of philanthropy and love. All of these demand thanksgiving and praise. II. COMMEMORATION. At this season we should reflect on the short and uncertain term of our existence upon the earth. Our life below is a journey through a wilderness

where we dwell not in enduring habitations, but in temporary tents. We shall one day die, and ought not to rejoice in growing older, unless we are conscious of an increasing preparation for a better world. Heaven is nearer than it was, and it behoves us to address ourselves with greater ardour and zeal to the prosecution of our pilgrimage thither. III. The last constituent of our spiritual feast is a RENEWED CONSECRATION OF OURSELVES TO THE SERVICE OF GOD. This implies a deep study of God's law. Our growth in holiness demands this effort and attention on our part, and we must not rely on the spontaneous and uncultured growth of our souls in religion. The commencement of a new year is a fitting time for reviewing our progress in Divine knowledge and adopting fresh plans for the future. (*Anon.*) *The Feast of Tabernacles* :—1. This feast was to be kept in remembrance of their dwelling in tents in the wilderness. Thus it is expounded here (ver. 43). "That your generations may know," not only by the written history, but by this ocular tradition, that "I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths." Thus it kept in perpetual remembrance (1) the meanness of their beginning, and the low and desolate state out of which God advanced that people. Note—those that are comfortably fixed ought often to call to mind their former unsettled state, when they were but little in their own eyes. (2) The mercy of God to them that when they dwelt in tabernacles, God not only set up a tabernacle for Himself among them, but with the utmost care and tenderness imaginable hung a canopy over them, even the cloud that sheltered them from the heat of the sun. God's former mercies to us and our fathers ought to be kept in everlasting remembrance. The eighth day was the great day of this feast, because then they were returned to their own houses again; and remembered how, after they had long dwelt in tents in the wilderness, at length they came to a happy settlement in the land of promise, where they dwelt in "goodly houses." And they would the more sensibly value and be thankful for the comforts and conveniences of their houses, when they had been seven days dwelling in booths. It is good for those that have ease and plenty sometimes to learn what it is to endure hardness. 2. It was a feast of "ingathering," so it is called (Exod. xxiii. 16). When they had gathered in the "fruit of their land" (ver. 39), the vintage as well as the harvest, then they were to keep this feast in thankfulness to God for all the increase of the year; and some think that the eighth day of the feast had special reference to this ground of the institution. Note—the joy of harvest ought to be improved for the furtherance of our joy in God. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof"; and therefore whatever we have the comfort of He must have the glory of, especially when any mercy is perfected. 3. It was a typical feast. It is supposed by many that our blessed Saviour was born much about the time of this feast; then He left His mansions of light above to "tabernacle among us" (John i. 14), and He dwelt in booths. And the worship of God under the New Testament is prophesied of under the notion of keeping the "Feast of Tabernacles" (Zech. xiv. 16). For—(1) The gospel of Christ teacheth us to "dwell in tabernacles," to "sit loose" to this world as those that have "here no continuing city," but by faith and hope, and a holy contempt of present things, to go out to Christ "without the camp" (Heb. xiii. 13, 14). (2) It teaches us to "rejoice before the Lord our God." Those are the circumcision, Israelites indeed, that always "rejoice in Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii. 3). And the more we are taken off from this world the less liable we are to the interruption of our joys. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*) *The Feast of Tabernacles* :—The use was—1. To remember them of their estate when they had no houses, but lived in tents, or tabernacles, or booths, made with boughs; no fields, no lands, but lived in the wilderness; and so to stir up a thankfulness for their happy change. 2. To remember them of the Lord's great works in driving out the Canaanites and giving that fruitful land unto them. Then they were a prey to all men, but now a terror to all men, wheresoever the fame of them came. 3. It served to preach unto them the doctrine afterward delivered by the apostle, to wit, that here we have no biding city, but should reckon of our houses as but of tabernacles for the time, our true hope being for houses and dwellings, and everlasting tabernacles not made with hands in heaven, &c. And may not we consider on our feast days all these things, although we have not now the same ceremonies? May not we remember our state past under superstition, cruelty, and bondage? May not we remember burnings and killings, and most hateful handlings of persecutors? May not we remember great wars and dissensions in this our native country, the fall of our friends, and the change of many houses? May not we remember great impositions and payments, and, in one word, very many miseries and calamities? Laying them to the

present times, wherein we enjoy truth and liberty of conscience without either death or danger, or so much as any fear, what a change is this to a man or woman that knoweth and feeleth the blessing! Oh, that we may send up to God most thankful thoughts for it while we live! Now, again, we enjoy peace, such as no nation hath had the like. We are not eaten up with heavy and continual payments, but we live as in heaven by comparison to former times. The Lord hath driven away the Canaanites that would have invaded and conquered had not He resisted for us and overthrown them. He hath made us a terror to our foes and a refuge or sanctuary for our friends, when erst foreign nations were lords over us. And, for the last point, we have no more certainty of abode here than they had, but look for the same end of faith, an enduring house in heaven. (*Bp. Babington.*) **Keep a feast unto the Lord.**—*A festival kept to the Lord*:—From the earliest ages of which any records remain mankind have been accustomed to commemorate joyful events, and to express the joy and gratitude which such events excited, by the observance of anniversary festivals. As the all-wise God well knew how difficult it would be to wean men from the observance of such festivals, and as they were capable of being rendered subservient to His own gracious designs, He saw fit under the ancient dispensation to give them a religious character, by directing His people to observe them in commemoration of the favours which they had received from His hand, and as an expression of their gratitude for those favours. Of these Divinely appointed festivals, several are mentioned in the Levitical law, but our only concern at present is with that which is prescribed in our text—“When ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord.” What, then, we may and ought to inquire—what is it to observe this day in a right and acceptable manner? The best answer which I can give to this question is furnished by our text. It is to keep or observe it as a festival unto the Lord. To keep a festival unto God is to observe it with a view, not to please ourselves, but to please and honour Him; to regard it as a day sacred to His special service, and to spend it in contemplating and praising His perfections, recollecting and thanking Him for His favours, rejoicing before Him in His existence, His character, His government, and His works, and thus giving Him the glory which is due to His name. We shall attempt—I. To give you a view of the manner in which this festival should be observed by us, CONSIDERED SIMPLY AS GOD’S INTELLIGENT CREATURES; and—II. Of the manner in which we should observe it, considered as SINFUL, GUILTY CREATURES, TO WHOM HIS GRACE AND MERCY ARE OFFERED THROUGH A REDEEMER. I. That the first of these proposed views may be placed before you in the clearest and most interesting light, let me request you to suppose that our first parents, instead of falling as they did from their holy state, had continued in it, until they were surrounded by a numerous family like themselves, and that in these circumstances they had set apart a day to be observed as a festival to their Creator and Benefactor. It is evident that if we can conceive of the manner in which they would have observed such a day we shall learn in what manner this day ought to be observed by us, considered simply as God’s intelligent creatures. Let us suppose the morning of their appointed festival to have just dawned. No sooner do they wake to a returning consciousness of existence than a recollection of the Author, Preserver, and Sustainer of that existence, and of their numberless obligations to His goodness, rushes upon and fully possesses their minds. No sooner do their eyes open than they are raised to heaven with a look expressive, in the highest degree, of every holy, affectionate emotion. Each one perceives, with clear intuitive certainty, that he is indebted to God for everything—that God is his life, his happiness, his all. These views fill his heart with adoring gratitude—gratitude, not like ours, a comparatively cold and half-selfish emotion, but a gratitude pure, fervent and operative, which carries out the whole soul in a rapturous burst of thankfulness and renewed self-dedication to God. Though invisible to their bodily eyes, He is not so to the eye of their minds; they perceive, they feel His presence; they feel that His all-pervading, all-enfolding Spirit pervades and embraces their souls, breathing into them love, and joy, and peace unutterable, and wrapping them up, as it were, in Himself. Thus each individual apart commences the observance of their festal day, and enjoys intimate and sweet and ennobling communion with the Father of spirits in solitary devotion. But man is a social being, and the social principle which God has implanted in his nature prompts him to wish for associates in his religious pleasures and pursuits. It is proper that he should wish for them, and if possible obtain them; for when a festival is to be kept unto the Lord, when thanksgiving and praise are to be offered,

two are better than one. United flames rise higher towards heaven, impart more heat, and shine with brighter lustre than while they remained separated. If private, solitary devotion be the melody of religion, united devotions constitute its harmony, and without harmony the music is not perfect and complete. Mark the feelings with which they approach and meet. Every eye sparkles with delight, every countenance beams with affection; there is but one heart and one soul among them all, and that heart and that soul is filled with holy gratitude and love, tempered by adoring admiration, reverence, and awe. Fresh excitements to the increase of these emotions are furnished by their meeting. Each one sees in his rational, immortal fellow-creatures, a nobler work of God, a brighter exhibition of his moral perfections, than the whole inanimate creation could afford. And while each one contemplates this image of God in his fellow-creatures, he is ready to exclaim, If these miniature images of God are so lovely, how infinitely worthy of love must the great original be? If there is so much to admire in the streams, what admiration does the fountain deserve? Nor is this all. In the various relations and ties which bind them together they see new proofs of all-wise benevolence, new reasons why they should love and thank Him who established these relations and formed these ties. Under the influence of these affections the yet stammering child is taught the name of its Creator and Benefactor, while to the attentive ear of those who are a little farther advanced in life the history of the creation and of all that God has done for His creatures is recounted; His commands, and their obligations to obey them, are stated; the nature and design of the festival which they are observing are explained; and they are taught to perform their humble part in its appropriate services. In these services all now join; and oh, with what perfect union of heart, with what self-annihilating humility, with what seraphic purity and fervency of affection, do they present their combined offering of thanksgiving and praise! Suffice it to say that the ear of Omniscience itself can discern no shade of difference between the language of their lips and that of their hearts unless it be this—that their hearts feel more than their lips can express. These sacred and delightful services being ended, they prepare to feast before their Benefactor; but this preparation is made, and the feast itself is participated with the same feelings which animated their devotions; for whether they eat, or drink, or whatever they do, they do all to the glory of God. On such an occasion they may, perhaps, place upon their board a greater variety than usual of the fruits of Paradise; but if so, it is not so much with a view to gratify their appetites as to exhibit more fully the various and ample provision which God has made for them, and thus, through the medium of their senses, to affect their hearts; for man has not yet begun to consume the bounty of Heaven upon his lusts. No; the blessing of God is implored and His presence desired as the crowning joy of their feast, without which even the fruits of Paradise would be insipid and the society of Paradise uninteresting. Thus while they feast upon the fruits of His bounty their souls feast upon the perfections which those fruits display. Thus God is seen and enjoyed in everything, and everything leads up their thoughts and affections to Him, while He sits, unseen in the midst of them, shedding abroad His love through all their hearts and rejoicing with benevolent delight in the happiness which He at once imparts and witnesses. Meanwhile their conversation is such as the attending angels, who hover around, would not be ashamed to utter—nay, such as God Himself is well pleased to hear. The law of kindness is on all their lips, for the law of love is in all their hearts. If such is the manner in which innocent creatures would keep a feast unto the Lord, then such is the manner in which we should aim to keep this annual festival. We should desire and aim to exercise the same feelings, to worship God with the same sincerity, fervency, and unity of affection, and to converse and partake of His bounty in the same manner. Having shown how we ought to keep this festival, considered simply as God's intelligent creatures, we shall now, as was proposed—

II. ATTEMPT TO SHOW HOW WE SHOULD KEEP IT, CONSIDERED AS SINFUL CREATURES, UNDER A DISPENSATION OF MERCY. In attempting this we shall pursue the same course which has been pursued in the former part of the discourse. We will suppose that the holy and happy community, whose festival we have been contemplating, fall from their original state and become sinners like ourselves. Now suppose that these creatures, in this sinful, guilty, wretched, despairing state, are placed under a dispensation, in which the grace and mercy of God are offered them through a Redeemer, and that just such a revelation is made to them as has been made to us in the New Testament. Suppose farther, that after they are placed under the new dispensation they resolve to observe a religious festival. What

would be necessary, what would be implied in their keeping it as a feast unto the Lord? I answer, the first thing necessary would evidently be a cordial reconciliation to God. Until such a reconciliation took place they could neither observe a religious festival nor perform any other religious duty in a right and acceptable manner. Indeed, they would have no disposition to do it, nor any of the feelings which it implies and demands. But reconciliation to God necessarily involves hatred of sin and self-condemnation, sorrow and shame on account of it. The exercise of faith in the Redeemer, through whom grace and mercy are offered, is also indispensably necessary to the right observance of a feast unto the Lord. And now let us suppose the community, which we have already twice contemplated, first as perfectly holy, and then as sinful, guilty, and undone, to be a third time placed before us, reconciled to God, exercising repentance and faith in Christ, and engaged in keeping a religious festival like that which we this day observe. They still feel, though in an imperfect degree, the same affection which we saw them exercise toward God in their original state; but these affections are, in a considerable degree at least, excited by different objects and variously modified by the change which has taken place in their situation. They still feel grateful to God for their existence, for their faculties, and for the various temporal blessings which surround them; but they now view all these things as blessings which they had forfeited and lost, and which had been repurchased for them by their Redeemer, and freely bestowed upon them as the gifts of His dying love. Hence they seem, as it were, to see His name on every blessing, and every blessing reminds them of Him. They still, as formerly, see and admire God's perfections as displayed in the works of creation; but their admiration and their praises are now principally excited by the far brighter, the eclipsing display which He has made of His moral perfections, in the Cross of Christ, in the wonders of redemption. Loud above all their other praises and thanksgivings may be heard the cry, Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift! Thanks be unto God and the Lamb for redeeming love! Even while observing a joyful festival, tears, the fountain of which is supplied by godly sorrow for sin, and gratitude to the Redeemer; tears, which it is delightful to shed, are seen on the same countenances which glow with love and hope, and beam with holy, humble joy in God. And when they sit down to the table of Providence, to feast upon His bounty, the exercise of these emotions is not suspended. They feel there as pardoned sinners ought to feel, and as they would wish to feel at the table of Christ, for the table of Providence is become to them His table; they remember Him there; they remember that whenever their daily food was forfeited by sin, and the curse of Heaven rested upon their basket and store, He redeemed the forfeiture, and turned the curse into a blessing. Hence they feast upon His bounty with feelings resembling those which we may suppose to have filled the bosoms of Joseph's brethren when they ate and rejoiced before him. (*E. Payson, D.D.*) *Harvest thanksgiving*:—A wise man was once asked a difficult question. He had been gazing at some ancient structure which had long since fallen into ruins. And as he stood by those ruined walls overgrown with ivy, he was asked the question: "What is it which soonest grows old?" What is it which is most quickly forgotten, and is the soonest out of date? The answer was summed up in one simple word—it was gratitude. That which soonest grows old is thankfulness. Now there is a great deal of truth in that answer, for we are all of us so ready to forget the giver as soon as we have received the gift. And this spirit of unthankfulness for every-day mercies is no recent thing. It has always been so. It was just the same when our Lord was upon earth. You will all remember the story of the ten lepers: only one returned to give thanks. Or look again, at the example of the Israelites in the wilderness. See God's constant care for them. On every page of their history we read, not of thankfulness—but of murmuring and discontent. It was to these same Israelites that the words of the text were spoken. We have just gathered in the fruits of the land, and to-day we are keeping—in a bright and hearty Thanksgiving Service—a feast unto the Lord. Let us now look a little more closely into this subject of thanksgiving. As we keep our feast to-day, let us look at some of the things for which we ought to be grateful, and then see how we can show our thankfulness in our daily life. In our general thanksgiving prayer, we thank God at every service for our creation. That is the first thing to be thankful for. God created us in His own image, and sent us into this world to live for His glory. Every one of us—even in the quiet round of every-day duties—can do something, if we try, to leave the world better than we found it. From first to last—in all its varied employments and in all its Christian duties—life is a work for God.

What a charm of sacredness is thus thrown over the most menial duty or the most trifling occupation! Let us remember "whose we are and whom we serve" in our every-day life. Your lot may be very humble—the circle in which you move may be very small—the work that you may be able to do very trifling, but still it is God's work. Let your lot be ever so humble, still it can be a noble one, if you are only true to yourself and your God. A noble life needs no adornment of wealth or position. Look, for example, at that life which closed amid loneliness and desertion within the embattled citadel of Khartoum. One little sentence written by that simple-hearted soldier—whose allegiance to his Queen was only equalled by his devotion to Christ—gives the key-note of his life. Speaking of Egypt, he said, "It is God's work and not mine—if I fail, it is His will—if I succeed, it is His work." And then there are other reasons for thankfulness in our preservation and all the blessings of this life, but above all, for the gift of Jesus Christ. This is the highest cause for thanksgiving, for what would earth have been without a Saviour? And as we thank God to-day for the late harvest, which is to provide us with our daily bread, let us also thank Him for the gift of His dear Son—the Bread of Life, which has come down from heaven—for the salvation and strength of our immortal souls. When we care very much for any one, how anxious we are to show our love by doing what we know will please them! And it should be just the same in our love for God. We should always be anxious to do what will please Him. But now, let us see how we may best show our gratitude for all that God sends us. The Prayer-Book tells us of two ways in which our thankfulness may be shown, "not only with our lips, but in our lives." The first way, then, to acknowledge God as the Giver of all good things, is by giving actual thanks. By words of gratitude in our prayers and by songs of praise and thanksgiving, such as we have joined in to-day. We have seen others called aside and laid upon a sick-bed, and God in His mercy has given us health and strength. But we are to render thanks, not only with our lips but in our lives. Thankfulness can be shown by a proper enjoyment of God's gifts. We are not to lay them by in a miserly manner. If God blesses us with the good things of this life, we are not to be selfish and think only of ourselves. In taking a proper enjoyment of things, we can also try to do good to others. But the highest of all gratitude is for us to realise that we are God's stewards. Let us give of our substance to any who are worse off than ourselves, ministering especially to those who, through sickness or adversity, are in need of our help. "To do good and to distribute, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." (*Philip Neale.*)

Ye shall dwell in booths seven days.—Sojourning in booths:—It was commemorative (see ver. 43). It was significant of—I. CHRIST TABERNACLING IN THE FLESH. Three facts are suggestive here of Christ's incarnation being foreshadowed in this feast. 1. John's use of the idea, "The Word dwelt (tabernacled) among us, full of grace and truth" (John i. 14). 2. The people's gathering of palm branches when persuaded of His Messiahship (Matt. xxi. 8, 9). 3. Christ chose "the great day of the feast," of this very Feast of Tabernacles, to identify Himself with one of its incidents. While the waters of Siloam were being, on that eighth day, poured on the altar steps, "Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink" (John vii. 37, 38). 4. Yet His tabernacle life was not permanent. Booths are for pilgrims, not residents. And Jesus was here but for a season. "Yet a little while I am with you." II. MAN'S INSECURE TENURE ON THE EARTH. 1. A booth of boughs and palms would quickly wither; so does our frail tabernacle. What are these bodies but tents of drooping flesh? 2. It was, moreover, occupied but a few days; and we are resident in this body only a brief season. Think not to stay long here. 3. The materials of the booths were of the earth and returned to the earth: mere growths from the soil, soon to decay and go back to the soil. Even so, "dust thou art," &c., "of the earth earthy." III. A CHRISTIAN'S PILGRIM CAREER. Israel dwelt in booths through their journey from Egypt to Canaan (see ver. 43). 1. Christ's redeemed are pressing through a wilderness. It is not their goal. 2. Rest and content are not to be sought here. A temporary accommodation is enough. 3. Earth's discomfort gives zest to desire for the "city of habitation." And as Israel, weary with their booth life, craved the sure abodes of Canaan, so we "earnestly desire to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven; for in this we groan, being burdened." 4. God's ordinance of a booth life was a pledge of the certainty of Canaan. It assured them that He desired them to journey forward to the goodly land. And He would have us "set our face Zionward." (*W. H. Jellie.*)

Dwelling in booths:—I. THE TEXT REMINDS US OF CONDITIONS OF LIFE VERY LIKE THIS DWELLING IN BOOTHS. 1. A feeble body, answering

its purpose many years, is like dwelling in booths. Every birthday from the first anniversary has seemed as though it must be the last; but they will be gathered to their graves full of years, as a shock of corn fully ripe. The cedar has fallen, but the fir-tree stands; the flower of the grass has withered, but some of the most tender blades survive. Verily, looking at the frailty of the body, God makes some of us to dwell in booths. 2. Providing by slender means all that is really needful for a large family is like dwelling in booths. 3. A morbidly sensitive spirit kept sound is like dwelling in booths. To the border-line of madness many come who are not permitted to cross. 4. A nature prone to gross evil and kept from the power of temptation is like dwelling in booths. 5. A church preserved in peace and unity, with the elements of evil within it and evil influences around it, is another example of God making to dwell in booths. While human nature is what it is, you cannot have association of any kind without the elements of mischief and the seeds of dissolution. Where there is continuance and unity and peace in a religious community, we have another illustration of God making to dwell in booths. 6. To have lived in a day of small things, and gradually to have come into a day of great things, is to have been made to dwell in booths. The once contracted business now extensive, the once limited profession now a wide and broad practice, and the once tiny house now a large establishment, are illustrations.

II. THE TEXT EXHIBITS GOD AS SUFFICIENT FOR US IN THE MOST NECESSITIOUS AND DANGEROUS CIRCUMSTANCES. 1. God hath in Himself all that is necessary for the working out of His will. He is not a cistern which may be broken, but He is an everlasting fountain. Whatever life, knowledge, wisdom, or power are needful or desirable, are in Himself. 2. God uses agents and instruments, but is not dependent upon any of the agents and instruments which He employs. His connection with all such does not bind or embarrass Him. It is nothing with Him to help, whether with many or with few, or with them that have no power. 3. God is conscious of His sufficiency. He thinks of Himself as sufficient, and feels to be sufficient. God had no more care of Israel when they dwelt in booths than when they abode in fenced cities. He had no misgiving about bringing the children of Israel through. 4. There is but one thing which prevents our fully experiencing the sufficiency of God, and that is sin—wilful and persistent sin. This shortens the arm of God, and this closes His ear. III. THE TEXT POINTS OUT A DUTY OF REMEMBRANCE WHICH WE ARE ALL LIABLE TO NEGLECT. This direction has chief reference not to the generation which actually dwelt in the booths, but to successive generations, and to these after they had become tenants of the cities of the Holy Land. Now if we are to keep in remembrance God's goodness to our ancestors, how much more should we keep in mind God's mercy to ourselves! There is a point here, however, which we may not overlook. God's mercy to a family in previous generations places the present members of that family under obligation. The same remark will apply to a nation and to a church—to any community or association. (*S. Martin, D.D.*) Moses declared . . . the feasts of the Lord.—*Pleasant ministries* :—"And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the Lord." What a change in his great ministry! Never was man charged with the delivering of so many disciplinary and legal words. It is time that he had something to say with easier music in it, conveying a pleasanter appeal to the imagination and the whole attention of Israel. It was a new mission. The lips of Moses must have grown hard in the delivery of hard speeches. It was his business always to deliver law, to recall to duty, to suppress revolution, to command and overawe the people whose fortunes he humanly led. What wonder if the people dreaded his appearance? That appearance might have been equal to a new Sinai, a new Decalogue—a harder speech of law and duty and servitude. It was a pleasant thing for Moses, too, this change in the tone of his ministry; he is now speaking of feasts, of festivals—times of solemn rejoicing—yea, some of the very feasts which were instituted were designated by names the roots of which signified to dance and be glad with great joy. An awful fate for any man to be merely the legal prophet of his age! A most burdensome mission always to be called upon to rebuke and chastise, to suppress, and to put men down to their proper level, and call them up to their proper obedience! Thus the Lord varies the ministry of His servants. He says, There will be no utterance of new law to-day, but this very day shall be a day of feasting and music and dancing; He will have a home in the wilderness—a glad, warm, happy home: all troublesome memories shall be dismissed and one overmastering joy shall rule this festal day. That is the speech He has been longing to make; but we would not let Him. He never wanted to make

any other speech; we ourselves forced the hard terms from His reluctant lips. A complete ministry is terrible and gracious. It is terrible by the necessities of the case. Consider the nature with which the ministry of heaven has to deal: "there is none righteous, no not one"; we have turned aside from the right way, and are far from the centres of light and rest and peace; sometimes nothing will reach us but fear, terror, awful denunciation of anger, and judgment. But the ministry is also gentle: there is no gentleness like it. The true ministry of Christ is marked by surpassing and ineffable grace: its eyes are full of tears; its great trumpet-tones are broken down by greater sobs; it pities the weak; it speaks a word of hope to the fallen; it tells the farthest off that there is time for him to get home before the nightfall, or if he be overtaken with the darkness the light will be in the house he has abandoned; it pleads with men; it beseeches men to be reconciled to God; it writes its promises in syllables of stars; it punctuates its speech with fragrant flowers; it breaks down into the omnipotence of weakness by clinging to the sinner when all men have abandoned Him in despair. We must establish a whole ministry. The mountain must have two sides: the side where the darkness lingers; the side where the light plays and dances in many a symbolism. This is human life. The two sides must go together. When the ministry thunders its law, it must be upheld; when it breaks down in tears over the Jerusalem that has rejected it, it must be regarded as the very heart of God. Notice the time when the feasts were spoken of. Let us regard the very position of the text as instructive. We have now read up to it; beginning with the bondage in Egypt, dwelling tearfully and sympathetically upon that pagan servitude, watching the children of Israel led forth by a mighty hand, we have noted the discipline which afflicted them educationally; by this time we have become familiar with their hardships, now it is a welcome relief to the reader to come upon festival, dancing, joy, delight—one touch of heaven in a very wilderness of desolation. This is the day we have longed for. There was a hope hidden in our hearts that, by and by, golden gates would swing back upon happy places and offer us the liberty of heaven. We have come to that Sabbatic time; now we are in times of jubilee and Sabbath, release, pardon, rapture, praising God all the time, having found a temple without a roof, a sanctuary without a wall, an infinite liberty vast as the Being which it adores. Notice whose feasts they were, and how joy is ennobled by solemnity. "And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the Lord." They were not fools' revels; they were not inventions even of Moses and Aaron; they were as certainly Divine creations as were the stars that glittered above. Is "feasts" not a word too frivolous to associate with the name of the Lord? No. If we are to judge by analogy, No. The God of flowers may be the God of feasts. We know the flowers are His; we know that no Solomon has ever arrayed himself in equal beauty; He who made those flowers must have made a feast somewhere—a feast of reason, a feast for the soul, a luxury for the inner taste, an appeal to the larger appetency. He who made the birds may surely be the God of the soul's music. The birds sing so blithely, without one touch of vanity; so purely, so independently, without pedantry, without sign or hint of human education; the God who set their little throats in tune may surely be the God of all pure music—the mother's broad laugh over her little one, the father's tender voice in the presence of distress and need; and He who made the birds' throat may have put it into the mind of man to make the trumpet, and the cornet, and the flute, and the harp, and the scabut, and the psaltery; they may be His judging by the happy analogies of nature. He who made summer, may have made heaven! There is but a step between them. (*J. Parker, D.D.*)

CHAPTER XXIV.

VERS. 2-9. Pure oil-olive beaten for the light.—*Directions for furnishing of the sanctuary*.—Care is here taken, and orders given, for the decent furnishing of the candlestick and table in God's house. I. THE LAMPS MUST ALWAYS BE KEPT BURNING. The law for this we had before (Exod. xxvii. 20, 21). It is here repeated, probably because now it began to be put in execution when other things were settled. 1. The people were to provide oil (ver. 2); and this, as everything else that was to be

used in God's service, must be of the best, pure oil-olive beaten—probably it was double-strained. This was to cause the lamps to burn. All our English copies read it "lamps"; but in the original it is singular (ver. 2), "To cause the 'lamp' to burn"; but plural (ver. 4), "He shall order the 'lamps.'" The seven lamps made all one lamp. In allusion to which the blessed Spirit of grace is represented by seven lamps of fire before the throne (Rev. iv. 5); for there are diversities of gifts, but one Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 4). Ministers are as burning and shining lights in Christ's Church; but it is the duty of people to provide comfortably for them, as Israel for the lamps. Scandalous maintenance makes a scandalous ministry. 2. The priests were to tend the lamps; they must snuff them, clean the candlestick, supply them with oil morning and evening (vers. 3, 4). Thus it is the work of the ministers of the gospel to hold forth that Word of life—not to set up new lights, but by expounding and preaching the Word to make the light of it more clear and extensive. II. THE TABLE MUST ALWAYS BE KEPT SPREAD. This was appointed before (Exod. xxv. 30). And here also: 1. The table was furnished with bread; not dainties or varieties to gratify a luxurious palate, but twelve loaves or cakes of bread (vers. 5, 6). Where there is plenty of bread there is no famine; and where bread is not there is no feast. There was a loaf for every tribe; for in our Father's house there is bread enough. They were all provided for by the Divine bounty, and were all welcome to the Divine grace. 2. A handful of frankincense was put in a golden saucer upon or by each row (ver. 7). When the bread was removed and given to the priests this frankincense was burnt upon the golden altar (I suppose) over and above the daily incense. And this was for a memorial instead of the bread, an offering made by fire, as the handful of the meat-offering which was burnt upon the altar is called the memorial thereof (chap. ii. 2). Thus a little was accepted as an humble acknowledgment, and all the loaves were consigned to the priests. All God's spiritual Israel, typified by the twelve loaves, are made through Christ a sweet savour to Him, and their prayers are said to come up before God for a memorial (Acts x. 4). The word is borrowed from the ceremonial law. 3. Every Sabbath it was renewed. When the loaves had stood there a week the priests had them, to eat with other holy things that were to be eaten in the Holy Place (ver. 9); and new ones were provided at the public charge, and put in the room of them (ver. 8). The Jews say, "The hands of those priests that put on were mixed with theirs that took off, that the table might be never empty, but the bread might be before the Lord continually." God is never unprovided for the entertainment of those that visit Him, as men often are (Luke xi. 5). (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*) *The sanctuary and its furniture*:—To conceive of the shape and appearance of the Tabernacle, you must measure out in your imagination a level ground-plot, about one hundred and fifty feet long, and about seventy-five feet broad; that is, an oblong square enclosed with linen canvas fastened on stakes, and cords about ten feet in height. Everything relating to the Tabernacle was inside of this enclosed area, which was called the court of the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle proper was a smaller enclosure at the far end of this court, equally distant from the two sides of it. It was formed of boards, overlaid with gold, fifteen feet high, set up alongside of each other in sockets of silver, and held together above by golden bars passing through golden rings fastened to the boards on the outside. The roof of this inner enclosure was formed of heavy curtains of several thicknesses thrown over these rows of upright boards from side to side. This was the Tabernacle proper, which was divided again into two apartments by heavy curtains dropped from the roof. The inmost of these covered chambers was the Holy of Holies; and the other, which was the ante-chamber to it, was the sanctuary, otherwise called the Holy Place. You thus observe three departments in this sacred structure: first, the enclosed uncovered space outside of the Tabernacle proper; then the sanctuary, or first room of the covered part; and third, that peculiarly sacred room in the deepest interior, called the Holy of Holies. Nor could any one come to the most Holy Place except by passing in through the court and through the sanctuary. In all this I see a symbolic history of redemption, and of the sinner's progress from his state of condemnation and guilt to forgiveness and peace in Christ, and to his final glory in the presence of his Lord. The first apartment was the outside court. It was here that the Jews came to offer their sacrifices. They accordingly appeared there as sinners. The outside court, therefore, represents man in his native condition. It is our place or moral *locale* so long as we are only beginning to believe on Christ and to cleanse ourselves from our filthy ways. The third and most interior apartment represents the heavenly, post-resurrection,

or glorified estate of man. There was the visible presence of the Lord. It was the hidden and guarded place into which vulgar eyes could not look, or unholy ones at all enter. But between the outside court and this inmost chamber of the Tabernacle was the sanctuary, or that department with which the text is directly concerned, and of which I propose more particularly to treat. Its position shows that it refers to a condition of things this side of the heavenly estate, and yet in advance of those rudimental experiences by which we come to be Christians. It was a picture of the Christian Church estate, that is, of the immunities and relations in which we stand as the accepted followers and servants of Jesus while yet we remain in this world. With this idea, then, let us take our station in the holy sanctuary, and simply look around us upon the objects to which the text directs attention. The chapter before us speaks of lamps. These were the burners upon the famous seven-armed candlestick of gold, which God directed Moses to make for the holy Tabernacle. The central and all-supporting shaft represented Christ, or rather "the right hand" of Christ, on which everything Christian depends. As the seven candlesticks and their lamps were sustained by that massive golden stem, so Christ sustains every member, branch, institution, and minister of His universal Church. It is He alone "that is able to keep us from falling." You will observe that the number of lamps and branches of this peculiar fabric was seven—the complete number—indicating that the whole Church was thereby represented. All rested upon the one central shaft; indicating that there is no true Church, and no branch of the true Church, which does not repose in Christ as its great and only foundation and dependence. The whole fabric was of one piece. The parts were all solidly joined together as one continuous mass of solid gold. And so the Holy Catholic Church is one. All the branches are compactly joined together in one central support and stay, which is Christ Jesus. And yet in that unity there was multiplicity and diversity. There were seven branches, and these seven were not all exactly alike. Some were shorter and lighter, and some were longer and heavier; some looked towards the east and some towards the west; some seemed to diverge very far from the central shaft, others rose immediately by its sides. There was multiplicity and diversity, and yet perfect, unbroken, graceful unity. Beautiful picture of the Church of Jesus! It is not confined to one nation, one dispensation, one denomination, but takes in all who are really united to Christ, and built upon Him, as their only dependence, no matter how diverse or remote from each other they may be in other respects. The object of these candlesticks and lamps was to furnish light to the sanctuary. The place had no windows, no other modes of illumination. The light which characterises Christendom as such is not from nature—not from human reason and philosophy—but from Christ and that pure Spirit which flowed and shone through Him and His inspired ministers. Without Christ, and the light which comes from the golden candlesticks of His glory, and the pure olive-oil of His Spirit, mankind are in darkness on all sacred things. "But he that doeth truth cometh to the light," and thus is made a son of light, whose path shall ever shine more and more unto the perfect day. But the chapter before us speaks of bread as well as lamps and light. Twelve loaves, baked of fine flour, arranged in piles on a table of gold, ever stood in the holy sanctuary. These loaves were to be renewed every Sabbath, and were to be eaten by the priests in the Holy Place. This golden table, the same as the supporting shaft of the golden candlesticks, represented Christ, and these unleavened loaves upon it, that pure bread from heaven which He giveth for the sustenance of them that are His. "Man liveth not by bread alone." There are wants and cravings in our nature which cannot be satisfied with the produce of the fields. There is in us a spiritual man, which must be fed and nourished with spiritual food, or it languishes and dies. We need higher supplies than this world can furnish, and which can be found only in the holy sanctuary. Jesus furnishes those supplies. It has been touchingly remarked that "every sigh of Jesus was a crumb of imperishable bread to us." The breaking of His body on the Cross has furnished the sublimest feast of time. There "they that hunger and thirst after righteousness" are for ever filled. There wisdom hath furnished her table, saying, "Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled." Here love hath poured out all her lavish fulness for the famishing children of men. There were to be twelve loaves ever on the golden table—a loaf for every name upon the jewelled breastplate of the priest. And they were ample loaves. One omer of manna was enough to serve a man for a day; but each of these loaves contained two omers. The bounties provided for our souls in Christ Jesus are superabundant—far more than enough for

all that will ever come to partake. Neither did these loaves ever wax old or become stale. Every Sabbath they were carefully renewed, and thus kept always fresh and sweet. The bread which Jesus gives never moulds, never spoils, and never loses its relish on the tongues of His priests. Having thus looked at the beautiful provisions for light and sustenance which characterised the holy sanctuary, there is yet a thought or two respecting its relation to the Holy of Holies, to which I will direct your attention. I have said that the Holy of Holies was meant to represent heaven, or that invisible and glorious state into which Christ has entered as our Priest and Forerunner, and into which all His saints shall enter in time to come. Now, the way into this most Holy Place was through the sanctuary. There was no other way of entering it. May not this be meant to signify that the way to heaven is through the Church? If there is any way of salvation outside of this holy Catholic Church I cannot find it revealed in the Scriptures, and fearful is the risk of him who ventures to trust in it. But connected with this is another and more sunny thought. If the sanctuary is the way to heaven, those who are in that way are very near heaven. Every true member of the Church has but a veil between him and the glorious presence of God and angels. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *Symbols and their meaning* :—Among the very first symbols appointed in this chapter, is the pure beaten oil for the lamps that were “to burn continually without the veil of the testimony in the Tabernacle of the congregation.” Now we find that John in the Apocalypse uses the very imagery that is here to set forth the completeness, the unity, and yet the variety of the Christian Church. The seven candlesticks, or the seven branches of the one candlestick, are seven churches; all the seven knit together in one golden stem; and through that stem rushing into each tube, and supplying each lamp with the most precious and perfumed oil, beaten oil rising from the stem and enabling it thus to burn. Now we have in that image the most complete exhibition of the variety of the Christian Church. It is not one stem, there are seven stems. There is not one visible Church, but many visible congregations, all of them, greater or less, constituting together the one universal or Catholic Church. It was never meant that there should be but one visible economy, but many differing economies; having their unity not in the uniformity of A to B, and B to C, but in the unity of all with the central stem to which they are all knit. So is it now in the Christian Church. The discipline of the Church is temporary, but the doctrines of the Church are eternal. In ecclesiastical polity it has varied, and it will vary; in essential attachment to the Saviour, trust in His sacrifice, love of vital and essential truth, it has been one in every age. The oil that supplied it was oil that rose from the stem, penetrated the branches, and thus fed the flame. I need not remind you how that very image is constantly used to denote the Holy Spirit of God. Then the object of this candlestick was to give light in the Tabernacle. So the object of a Church is to give light; and if it fail to give light it is worthless. The best candlestick would not be that which gave least light, but most; and no exquisite beauty of its chasing, no amount of gold in its composition, would be any compensation for its failing to do that which is its end and its mission, to give light to them that are in the household. The very end and object of a Christian is to be a light; and that is the best Church that casts the light upon the truths of the Bible, the problems of the soul, the hopes of the Christian, the way that leads to glory. After the representation of the candlestick we have the bread for a memorial before the Lord. This bread consisted of twelve loaves upon a table of gold, and had two meanings; probably one was to bring the produce of the fields of the earth under the roof of the sanctuary of God, that it might be seen that the same God who saves the soul and feeds it with living bread also supplies the wants of the body, and makes the corn to grow upon the earth to bring forth abundance for man and for beast. Or, secondly, it may have been designed to show that there was a higher want than the want of the bread that perisheth; that there is in man's soul a need, a hunger for the bread that endureth unto life eternal; which the viands of nature never could furnish, which God must send as He sent the manna—directly and immediately from heaven. And lastly, it was used to be food for Aaron and the priests; everything being consecrated in that sanctuary, and associated in some way with God and the hopes of heaven and of eternity. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *The priest setting the lamps in order daily represents Christ causing His people daily to receive and give forth light and life* :—In the midst of a dark world believers are set up as lights (see Phil. ii. 15; Matt. v. 16). They should be as the Baptist, “burning and shining lights.” They should be representatives of Christ Himself, who “shone as the light in darkness.” And they must shine—

1. Not by natural gifts, but by grace. There must be the beaten oil, pressed out of Israel's olive-trees; not merely talent or natural fervour and benevolence. 2. Clearly. There were golden snuffers for these lamps, and the use of them was committed to the priest who went in to set things in order. Believers must have their gifts and graces stirred up, so that there be no dullness, indecision, languor. 3. Constantly. Every day in succession shine as before; never hide the light. If there be a place where it is not duty to speak, yet there is no place where it is not duty to think and feel for God. 4. Calmly; for the light of these lamps did not sputter as it burned. The oil was pure. Believers must have the lamb-like spirit of Jesus, putting away all admixture of human temper; not reproving with the heat of human passion, not harshly upbraiding the obstinate sinner, not impatient or hasty or fierce even when enormous wickedness and deceit appear. A calm light generally shines full. 5. In the face of the world. Cast your light fair on the world's sins, that they may see them. Point out their ungodliness, their lawlessness, their unbelief. Bear your testimony where the truth is denied in your presence. Never be afraid of dazzling the world with too much light, but plainly show them that they are wholly sinful, wholly ruined, wholly helpless; and speak of a present, immediate, free, full pardon in the Saviour. 6. So as to show the golden table and the golden altar. The lights of the candlestick did so. Was not this pointing the eye to Christ, who died and who is risen? The bread on the table is Christ, who gave His life for us; the golden altar and its incense is Jesus exalted and accepted. Here is full salvation. 7. As if you alone were responsible for the enlightening of the dark world. The candlestick was the only light; so is the Church. And let every member feel responsibility. Perhaps if you shine not, some soul shall be left for ever in darkness. If one lighthouse on the sea-shore were obscured, how many ships might be lost in consequence, especially if formerly that lighthouse used to direct to the haven! Oh, then, how many may perish if you backslide and shine not as before! This is our time for shining. When Jesus comes His light will dim ours; we shall shine with Him, but our privilege of bringing others shall be ended. When the sun rises the vessel needs no more the help of the beacon-light. (A. A. Bonar.)

Christ an enlightening presence:—Here is the experience of a little blind boy, which shows what a blessed light the presence of Jesus gives. This boy had had an attack of scarlet fever, which left him perfectly blind. One day his minister called to see him. In talking about this affliction, he said, "Well, my dear boy, this is hard for you, isn't it?" He did not answer for a moment; then he said, "I don't know that I ought to say 'hard'; God knows best"; but his lips quivered, and a little tear stole down his cheek. "Yes, my child; you have a kind Saviour, who loves you, and feels for you, even more than your mother does." "I know it, sir," said the little boy, "and it comforts me." "I wish Jesus was here to cure Frank," said his little sister. "Well," said I, "He will open the eyes of little Frank's soul to see what a dear, loving Saviour He is. He will show him that a blind heart is worse than blind eyes; and He will help him to see and enjoy heavenly things in all their beauty, and this will make him a thousand times happier than many children who have the use of their bodily eyes." "Still, I can't help wishing he could see," said Lizzie. "I dare say; but I hope you don't try to make Frank discontented?" "Frank isn't discontented," said Lizzie, earnestly; "he loves God. And love makes its own sunshine, doesn't it, Frank?" "I don't feel cross about it now," said the poor blind boy, meekly. "I pray, and think about the sweet hymns I learned in Sabbath School, and I sing, and sing, and then I think that Jesus is with me, and it feels light, and—and—I forget that I'm blind at all," and a sweet light played over his pale features as he spoke. That was the light which the presence of Jesus gives. The Tabernacle taught us that His presence with His people was intended to be an enlightening presence. (Richard Newton, D.D.)

Christ a comforting presence:—Another thing that the Tabernacle taught, in reference to Christ's presence with His people, was that it will be a comforting presence. There was the table of shewbread. This was a table covered over with gold, and on which twelve fresh loaves of bread were placed every Sabbath day. It was intended to teach the Jews what God teaches us in that sweet promise which says, "Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure" (Isa. xxxiii. 16). This table of shewbread pointed to Jesus. He is "the living bread that came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever" (John vi. 51). And we know how bread strengthens, or comforts, men's hearts. And then the golden altar of incense taught the same thing. As the priest burnt the incense on this altar, the perfume rose in clouds of fragrant smoke that filled the

Tabernacle. This fragrance was most pleasing and refreshing. And the meaning of it was, that when we love and serve Jesus, the prayers that we offer to God, and the work that we do for Him, are just as pleasant to Him as the fragrance of this incense is to us. How much comfort there is in this thought! And then all the things in the Tabernacle—the brazen altar of burnt-offering, the laver, the candlestick, the table of shewbread, and the golden altar of incense—were intended to lead the thoughts of those who worshipped there to what was on the other side of the veil that hung down in the Holy Place. There, beyond that veil, was the most Holy Place. In it was the ark, with the glory of God shining brightly upon it. That place represented heaven. And so, when we see the Tabernacle showing us how Jesus was to be with His people, to pardon them, and to purify them, and to enlighten them, and strengthen them, we see it teaching us how all that Jesus does for His people now is to make them ready for heaven. And if this is so, we may well say that the presence of Jesus with His people is a comforting presence. We have just had an illustration of one point of our subject from a little blind boy. We have another illustration here from an old blind woman. She lived in North Wales, and was known all through that part of the country as “Blind Mary.” Wales is a grand old country. Mountains, and rocks, and lakes, and waterfalls in every variety of form are found there. Mary’s cottage was in one of the wildest parts of this country. Great rocks lay scattered around on every side. Ferns and wild flowers peeped out from under them. There was no more charming view in all that country than was to be seen in front of Mary’s cottage. One beautiful summer evening she was sitting there, with her large Bible on her knee. She was spelling out its meaning as her fingers went slowly over the raised letters. Just then a traveller who had been climbing the mountain came near. With the usual quickness of the blind Mary heard his footsteps, and asked him to take a seat. As he did so she pointed out to him the most interesting views in the landscape before them. He looked at her with surprise, and said, “They told me that blind Mary lived up here; but I can hardly believe that you are blind. You seem to see the mountains and lakes as well as I do.” “I used to look at them with so much pleasure when I could see, that I know all about them, although I have been blind for years.” “Doesn’t it make you unhappy, Mary, to think that you can never look at them again?” The blind woman’s eyes filled with tears, as she answered, “Don’t ask me that, sir. At first I felt almost angry with God for afflicting me so; but now I can bless His holy name. I see something better, sir, than rocks and mountains. I see Jesus, my Saviour, and the thought that He loves me makes me happy. Forgive an old woman’s boldness, sir. You tell me you have good eyesight, and that you can see yonder lakes, and the blue mountains beyond; but, oh! sir, did you ever see that wonderful sight, Jesus Christ laying down His life for you?” The traveller looked at blind Mary with great interest, and said, “Mary, I am afraid I have not thought about these things as I ought; but I promise you that I will do so; I shall never forget my evening’s climb up these mountains, and what you have said to me.” “God bless you, sir! But what should I, a poor old blind woman, do without my Saviour? I’m never alone, for He is with me. I’m not afraid to die, either, because He has washed away my sins in His blood; and when I leave these mountains and lakes I shall go, I know, to a better country. ‘Mine eyes shall see the King in His beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off.’ And I believe I shall meet you there, because I shall ask my Saviour to open your eyes, that you may see yourself first as a sinner, and then see Jesus as your Redeemer.” Certainly the presence of Jesus was a comforting presence to poor blind Mary. (*Ibid.*) **Take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof.**—*The shewbread as typical of Christ*:—Twelve loaves were always on the golden table, answering to the number of the twelve tribes; and Christ is all-sufficient; His salvation can suffice for every case; Christ for every man—refused, indeed, and rejected by numbers, but sufficient for all. They were fresh, as week by week they were placed there; and Christ is ever the same gracious Saviour, and His salvation ever fresh and ever satisfying. He is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. He is “the continual Bread.” At all times His words apply—“I am the Bread of Life,” &c. The shewbread also was eaten by the priests in the sanctuary on the Sabbath. And here we may discern a blessed type of privilege and communion; for we remember that all true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, all who have been born again of the Spirit, and are led and taught by the Spirit, answer to these privileged priests. All true believers are addressed as a holy priesthood, whose office it is to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus

Christ, as a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, that they should show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light. The arrangement of the Tabernacle may remind us that such have come to this communion with God by blood. They have passed, in the Tabernacle court, the brazen altar of burnt-offering, that which told of atonement through the propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God. Through this sacrifice they have found pardon and acceptance. They have been cleansed in the laver, having received the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost; and thus they reach the Holy Place, where they may have sweet communion and fellowship with God through His dear Son, may feed upon Christ the living Bread, may rejoice in the light of Christ, and in the prevailing efficacy of His intercession. (*J. H. Holford, M.A.*) *The table for the bread of faces* :—1. Here remark, (1) Bread is the staple of life. The manna is called “bread from heaven.” In the present case the bread is made of fine flour, ground between the millstones. (2) It is most likely unleavened, though the book nowhere affirms this expressly. The Passover bread, and most, if not all else offered unto the Lord, was unleavened (ehaps. ii. 5–11; vi. 14–17). (3) It remained on the table from one Sabbath until the next; even on their journeys it was not omitted (see Numb. iv. 7). Therefore is it called shewbread—bread of faces—bread continually before faces of the Lord. This renders it the more likely to be unleavened; for in that climate where the manna remaining overnight spoiled, leavened bread a week old would be sour. (4) The frankincense was probably placed in some of the dishes provided, and was removed and burnt in the censers or on the incense altar on the Sabbath. 2. Let us inquire into the typical meaning of the table, its furniture, and its contents. In general it exhibits Messiah as the Bread of God, that comes down from heaven and sustains the life of the Church (John vi. 35–39). But particularly, (1) The wood and the gold, as throughout, symbolise the human and the Divine natures in the person of Christ. (2) The sufferings of the Saviour may be alluded to in the grinding of the flour and the action of the fire in baking. (3) The twelve cakes or loaves are the twelve tribes of Israel, for each and all of whom bread was provided. (4) The frankincense, when offered, expresses prayers and thanksgivings of the Church. (5) The continual presence of the bread is a guarantee that spiritual food shall never fail, but a store is perpetually on hand. (6) The exchange of the bread and the priests eating it in the Holy Place on the Sabbath sets forth clearly and forcibly that abundant provision of spiritual food and nourishment which the Lord’s day always brings with it to the people of His love. (7) Its exclusive appropriation to the priests intimates the limited privileges of the people, and prepares for the contrast of a later day, when they become elevated as kings and priests unto God. (8) The unleavened bread indicates the absence of any process of decay. Leaven is the first step towards dissolution, and its prohibition assuredly intimates the absence of all tendency to corruption in the Redeemer, who, even in a physical sense, saw no corruption. Does not this teach that in the sacramental supper we ought not to use leavened bread, bread in the first stage toward utter putrefaction? Moreover, the other idea, suggested by the unleavened bread of the Passover as an indication of being hastily driven out on a pilgrimage journey, is still applicable: we are travelling through a strange land toward the heavenly Canaan. (*George Junkin, D.D.*) *Christ the true Presence Bread* :—Christ Jesus is the True Presence Bread. On Him the eye of Jehovah ever looks with infinite complacency. He is the “Bread of God.” “All that God is, finds sweet refreshment in Him.” We, too, by faith, see Him, and in Him are seen. His place is ours. We are made to sit together with Him in heavenly places. Where He is there, representatively, are we. His perfect obedience, too, is ours. What He is, that are we. Christ, too, is our Staff of Life. He who is the Bread of God is our Bread also. The Bread of our life. By faith we eat His flesh, and drink His blood. He is the true, the proper nourishment of our souls. We live only as we feed upon Him. It was not lawful for any of the priests to eat of the shewbread of the Tabernacle (Matt. xii. 4). Under the new covenant the priesthood includes every believer. All, who by faith are born unto the Israel of God, may eat of the True Shewbread. God has spread a table in the wilderness of which all His people are called to be partakers. He Himself invites them to feast upon its rich provision. He says, “Eat, O My friends, yea, drink abundantly.” (*F. H. White*). *The table and shewbread typical of Christ and His Church* :—I. The mystery or the GOSPEL of the TABLE, upon which this bread was set every Sabbath, and there continued all the week, until a fresh set of loaves were placed in their room. This table was a type of our Lord

Jesus Christ, and of communion with Him, in the administration of the Word and ordinances. It was typical of the person of Christ, in both His natures : for there are two natures in Him, human and Divine. The human nature of Christ may be signified by the wood of which this table was made, and His Divine nature by the gold it was overlaid with. And this shewbread table was not only typical of Christ, as to the matter of it ; being made of such excellent, incorruptible wood, and that overlaid with pure gold ; but also with respect to the decorations of it. It had a crown of gold upon it, which may be expressive of that honour and glory which is due to Christ, and is given unto Him as the King of kings and Lord of lords. The border of gold, with the crown upon it, about this table of shewbread, is also significant of what may be observed in Christ. For as this phrase, when applied to the Church of Christ, where it is said, " We will make thee borders of gold, with studs of silver " (Song of Sol. iii. 11), may denote the graces of the Spirit of God bestowed upon His people, which is as ornamental to them as borders of gold and studs of silver ; so this, being applied to Christ, may denote that fulness of grace that there is in Him. He is full of grace and truth. He hath received the Spirit, and the gifts and graces thereof without measure. Thus this table was typical of the person of Christ. It may also be considered as typical of communion with Him. A table among men is an emblem of communion and fellowship. Here men sit, eat, drink, and converse together : and this shewbread table is an emblem of the saints' communion with Christ, in the present state more especially. There is the table of the Lord, to which His people are now admitted, where He sits down with them, and they with Him, to have fellowship with Him in the ministration of the Word and ordinances, of which He is the sum and substance. Before I dismiss this head, give me leave to observe unto you that there were rings upon the shewbread table, and staves to be put in these rings, which were for the removing and carrying it from place to place, and which was done by the Levites, when it was necessary ; as while they were in the wilderness, and before the Tabernacle had a fixed place for it. For wherever the Tabernacle was carried, the ark and the table were also. II. I proceed in the second place to give you some account of the gospel, and the mystery of THE SHEWBREAD SET UPON HIS TABLE. This may be considered as typical of the Church of God, who are called bread. " We being many, are one bread, and one body " (1 Cor. x. 17). They are all one bread ; and they may be fitly signified by the shewbread, by these twelve cakes of unleavened bread, set continually upon the table every Sabbath-day. As they were made of fine flour, and into unleavened cakes, so they may denote those that are upright in heart and conversation. Israelites, indeed, who have the truth of grace in them ; who are such as keep the feast, not with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. The twelve cakes had reference to the twelve tribes of Israel ; so these may signify the whole of the spiritual Israel of God, whether consisting of Jews or Gentiles ; even that general assembly and Church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven. In the original text it is " the bread of faces " ; because this bread was always before the face or faces of God, before all the Three Divine Persons in the Trinity ; before God the Father, Son, and Spirit ; before Jehovah, before the Divine Shechinah, which dwelt between the cherubim, over the mercy-seat of the ark, a symbol of the Divine presence. It was continually before the Lord, as our text expresses it ; and this may denote the people of God's constant and continual presentation of themselves before the Lord in acts of public and religious worship. But it may still have a higher sense than this ; it may have respect unto these persons, being always under the eye and care of God. Not only are the eyes of His providence upon them which run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of those whose hearts are upright towards Him, to see that no hurt comes to them, that they stand in need of nothing, and to protect, preserve, and defend them ; but His eyes of love, grace and mercy are always upon them. He never withdraws His eyes from them. Again, this shewbread, and the twelve loaves thereof, were placed upon the table, where they stood firm and safe. This may denote the standing and security of the saints and people of God upon our Lord Jesus Christ, that sure foundation God has laid in Zion : that foundation of the apostles and prophets. Here they have a sure and safe standing, as on a rock—the Rock of Ages—against which the powers of hell and earth can never prevail. And as about this shewbread table there was a border of gold, to keep everything put upon it from falling off, this may still further point out unto us the safety of the people of God, who are set upon the shewbread table, our Lord Jesus Christ. And then you

may further observe, this shewbread was placed upon the table every Sabbath-day ; there was a constant succession ; the table was never empty. This may denote the constancy of true believers, that have the interest of Christ at heart, in assembling continually before the Lord. Not forsaking the assembling of themselves together, but, like the primitive Christians, continuing steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and in fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. Or, rather, it may denote the constant succession of the children and people of God in the world. This shewbread, set upon the table, may also be emblematical of Christ Himself ; and that as He is the spiritual food of His people. And there being twelve of these loaves upon the table, may denote the fulness and sufficiency of Christ. Here is bread enough and to spare. And as this bread was continual bread, was always upon the table, so it may denote the permanency of Christ. He is always the same—the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. And as this was set upon the table by the priests, and only by them, and none ate of this bread but the priests only, Aaron and his sons (who may be significant of the ministers of the Word, or of Christians in common under the gospel dispensation) ; if we understand it of the ministers of the Word, it points out that they set before the people the shewbread, even the wholesome and salutary words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and feed the people with knowledge and understanding. But if we understand it (as I rather do) as expressive of the people of God in common, who under the gospel dispensation are all made kings and priests to God, it denotes that these, and these only, eat of this spiritual food. None but they do it ; none but they can do it. (*John Gill, D.D.*)

Vers. 10–16. Blasphemed the name of the Lord.—*Blaspheming against God's holy name* :—"Swearing is a sin that hath more malignancy in it against God, by how much the less is the temptation to it," says Burroughs ; and adds, "I verily believe that if God had never made the Third Commandment, there could never have been so many oaths in the world ; but it springs from a mere malignancy of spirit in man against God because He has forbidden, for no profit can arise from the practice." Yet, while "no profit" comes to the blasphemer, great ill and grief are thereby caused to others. **I. THE HISTORIC INTEREST OF THIS INCIDENT.** This act of blasphemy, and the judgment which it called forth on the sinner—1. Brought out clearly that the name of the Lord was Israel's most solemn trust. 2. Introduced the significant custom of avoiding the very use of the name of the Lord. Certainly this may admonish us against an undue freeness in the use of the august name either in pious speech or effusive prayer. **II. THE HEINOUS QUALITY OF THE CRIME.** 1. The crime defined. Blasphemy is calumny and insult against the holy God, uttered with the intention to defame Him. It not only expresses the hatred of Him in the speaker's own heart, but aims at awakening in his hearer's mind an equal loathing of Jehovah and all His claims. It is held up in Scripture as an assault upon the dignity and sanctity of God's name (*Psa. lxxiv. 18 ; Isa. lii. 5 ; Rom. ii. 24*). 2. The root of the sin. This must be traced to the vileness of the human heart, and its natural enmity to God (*cf. Matt. xv. 19*). It should be noticed also as being the outgrowth of folly and pride (see *2 Kings xix. 22 ; Psa. lxxiv. 18*). Of all sins, blasphemy is an indication of a mind mad with impiety. 3. Its great offensiveness to God and man. How hateful to God is evident from the penalties inflicted (see *v. 16 and cf. Isa. lxxv. 7 ; Ezek. xx. 27–32 ; xxxv. 11, 12 ; Matt. xii. 31, 32*), how hurtful to man is manifest from *Psa. xlv. 15, 16 ; lxxiv. 10, 18, 22*. They who revere "this glorious and fearful name, The Lord thy God" (*Deut. xxviii. 58*) are distressed at its profanation. Louis IX. of France branded swearers' lips with a hot iron for this offence, and when some complained that the punishment was too severe, he replied, "I could wish that by searing my own lips I could banish all profanity from my realm." **III. FACTS EXPLANATORY OF SUCH BLASPHEMOUS SPEECH.** The sin of profanity points to—1. An ungoverned tongue. 2. Passionate contention and strife. 3. An unsanctified heart. (*W. H. Jellie.*) *Slaying the blasphemer* :—**I. THE EVIL RESULTING FROM CONNECTION WITH THE UNGODLY,** "whose father was an Egyptian"—said by the Rabbins to be the man whom Moses killed. **II. THE DANGER ARISING FROM INDULGENCE IN PASSIONATE ANGER** : "strove" ; the blasphemy was uttered in a quarrelsome passion. **III. THE BLASPHEMY WHICH, in this case, RESULTED FROM SUCH INDULGENCE.** "Cursed" the holy name of Jehovah ; which, the Israelites claimed, belonged to none but Israelites. **IV. THE PUNISHMENT WHICH ALL LIKE SIN MERITS.** (*W. Wayland, B.A.*) *Stoning the blasphemer* :—**I. HIS PERSON.** He is said to be the son of an Egyptian by an Israelitish woman.

His father was one of that mixed multitude which came out of Egypt with Israel (Exod. xii. 38), whom this woman married as many other women then married Egyptian men, to decline their rage and fury. For at that time the law prohibiting marriages with the heathen was not given them, and some charitably say he was a seeming proselyte; it is more probable that as his mother taught him to speak so his father taught this his son to blaspheme. II. THE OCCASION. He was of a quarrelsome, boisterous, and passionate temper, which demonstrates the danger of mixed marriages. For children, like the conclusion of a syllogism, follow the worst part. III. HIS HEINOUS ACTION. He both blasphemed and cursed. In the heat and height of contention, what will not graceless persons both say and do? If this man was drunk, it was with frenzy, which made him belch forth blasphemies and horrid execrations out of his black mouth, and blacker gipsy heart. 1. He blasphemed ("Nakab," Hebrew signifies "perforate," to bore through). Thus blasphemers do pierce and strike through the sacred and tremendous name of God. Such diabolical wretches would both "bore" His name and "gore" His person if they could. 2. He cursed ("Kalal," Hebrew signifies "leviter de aliquo loqui," to vilify and scoff at). Thus he set at naught the God of Israel, against whom, it seems, his quarrel was (saith Jerome) more than against that Israelite he quarrelled with. Thus he (like those three unnatural sons, that tried their archery which could shoot nearest their father's heart) shot his arrows at God and cursed himself. Cursing men are cursed men; such dogs come not into heaven by barking (1 Cor. vi. 9, &c.; Rev. xxii. 15). IV. THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS SUFFERING. As—1. He was apprehended as a grand malefactor, even against God Himself; impeaching the Divine honour by blasphemy and cursing out of a deep intestine malignity. 2. This capital offender is carried away to Moses, the chief magistrate, who soon committed him to custody, and probably confined him with chains and fetters; for it is improbable there could properly be any strong prisons in the wilderness, where they lived only in tents. Though Moses might have put him to death by virtue of that law against cursing father, &c. (Exod. xxi. 17), but the crime being very heinous against God Himself, as he used to do in other arduous cases, so in this he consults with God for a condign punishment. 3. God, the judge of all the earth, denounces his doom, "He shall be stoned": a punishment answerable to his stony heart. Let those that teach their tongues to lie, swear, curse, and blaspheme by a daily custom, consider this severe sentence of God, and what danger hangeth over their heads every day. 4. The people stone him, for—1. It was a common quarrel to vindicate the contempt cast upon their common Benefactor, from whom they had their being and well-being. 2. That by executing this severity, they might be cautioned from committing the like abominable crime. Thus the reason is rendered, "That all Israel may fear" (Deut. xiii. 11). And—3. This was a means to pacify God, by putting away that evil (both person and thing) from among them; whereas His anger would have been incensed against them, had they permitted the blasphemer to pass unpunished. And whereas God had not as yet made a particular law against blasphemy; now upon this particular occasion a general law is here superadded for punishing blasphemers in all succeeding ages (vers. 15, 16). And God ordained also, that the witnesses who heard him blaspheme should lay their hands upon his head when he was to be stoned. 1. To confirm their testimony and the truth of it, that they did not, by slander, take away his innocence, nor, by murder, his life. 2. That his blood might be upon his own head, and that they were not guilty of his sin. If so—3. It was a kind of imprecation, that they might suffer the same severity (so Deut. xvii. 7, 12; xix. 20, &c., shows). 4. This sacrifice of justice expiates wrath from the survivors. (*C. Ness.*) "The name":—It is striking to notice that in the Hebrew text it is only said that he blasphemed "The name"; what that was being left unwritten. On this omission the later Jews grounded their prohibition of the use of the word Jehovah, under almost any circumstances. "Those who utter the name of God according to its sound," says the Talmud, "have no position in the world to come." The priests might use it in the Temple services, but even they were not to let it cross their lips elsewhere. In the Hebrew Bible the vowels of the word Adonai, "Lord," are placed below it, and in the Greek it is always suppressed, the word Kurios, "Lord," being used in its place; a practice followed by the English version. Traces of this aversion to utter the Divine name occur early in the Old Testament, as where it is withheld from Jacob at Peniel, and from Manoah. This dread of using the special name of the Deity characterised antiquity from the earliest ages, through the belief that it expressed

the awful mysteries of the Divine essence, and was too holy to be breathed. Thus the "name of God is in the angel," who was to lead Israel through the wilderness (Exod. xxiii. 21), and the Temple was to be built for "the name" (2 Sam. vii. 13), but in neither case is it given. Such reverence, just in itself, early led, however, to many superstitions. The knowledge of the secret name of any god or angel was thought to convey, to him who knew it, the control of their supernatural powers. He who discovered the hidden name of the god Ea, of the Accadians, became invested with attributes higher than those of the gods. The name, in fact, was regarded as a personification of its owner, with which was indissolubly connected the possession of his essential characteristics. Thus the Romans used the word "numen" for a divinity, by a mere play on the word "nomen," "a name." Among the Egyptians there was a god whose name it was unlawful to utter; and it was forbidden to name or to speak of the supreme guardian divinity of Rome. Even to mention a god's name in taking an oath was deemed irreverent. In the book of Henock a secret magic power is ascribed to the Divine name, and "it upholds all things which are." Men learned it through the craft of the evil angel, Kesbeel, who in heaven, before he was cast out, gained it by craft from Michael, its original guardian. Nor did the ancient world, alone, regard a name as thus potent. The Scandinavians firmly believed that if that of a fighting warrior were spoken out loud, his strength would immediately depart from him, for his name was his very essence. At this day, moreover, the true name of the Emperor of China is kept a profound secret, never to be uttered—perhaps to impress his subjects with his unapproachable elevation above common mortals. (*C. Geikie, D.D.*) *The sin of profanity*:—There is not a sin in all the catalogue that is so often peremptorily and suddenly punished in this world as the sin of profanity. There is not a city or a village but can give an illustration of a man struck down at the moment of imprecation. At New Brunswick, U.S., just before I went there as a student, this occurrence took place in front of the college. On the rail-track a man had uttered a horrible oath. He saw not that the rail-train was coming. The locomotive struck him and instantly dashed his life out. The peculiarity of the circumstance was that the physicians examining his body found hardly a bruise, except that his tongue was cut out! There was no mystery about it. He cursed God and died. In Scotland a club assembled every week for purposes of wickedness, and there was a competition as to which could use the most profane oath, and the man who succeeded was to be president of the club. The competition went on. A man uttered an oath which confounded all his comrades, and he was made president of the club. His tongue began to swell, and it protruded from the mouth, and he could not draw it in, and he died, and the physicians said, "This is the strangest thing we ever saw: we never saw any account in the books like unto it: we cannot understand it." I understand it. He cursed God and died. At Catskill, N.Y., a group of men stood in a blacksmith's shop during a violent thunderstorm. There came a crash of thunder and some of the men trembled. One man said, "Why, I don't see what you are afraid of. I am not afraid to go out in front of the shop and defy the Almighty. I am not afraid of the lightning." And he laid a wager on the subject, and he went out and shook his fist at the heavens, crying, "Strike, if you dare!" and instantly he fell under a bolt. What destroyed him? Any mystery about it? Oh, no; he cursed God and died. Oh, my brother, God will not allow this sin to go unpunished. There are styles of writing with manifold sheets, so that a man writing on one leaf writes clear through ten, fifteen, or twenty sheets; and so every profanity we utter goes right down through the leaves of the book of God's remembrance. (*T. De Witt Talmage.*)

CHAPTER XXV.

VERS. 2-55. A Sabbath of rest unto the land.—*The sabbatic year and jubilee*:—1. I do not suppose that these sabbatic regulations referred severally to separate and distinct things. The seventh day, the seventh month, the seventh year, and the year of jubilee, as I take them, all express the same great thought, and are related to each other in signification as the different sections of a telescope. They fold into each other. The one is only a repetition of the other on a larger scale.

And they all range in the same line to give a focus for gazing the further into the depths and minuter details of one and the same scene. We have sabbaths of days, and sabbaths of months, and sabbaths of years, and septenaries of years, all multiplied in each other with augmenting interest, to indicate the approach of some one great seventh of time when all God's gracious dealings with man shall come to their culmination, and to point the eye of hope to some one grand ultimate sabbath, in which the weary world shall repose from its long turmoil and all its inhabitants keep jubilee. 2. The word "Jubilee" is of doubtful origin and signification. Some derive it from a verb which means to recall, restore, bring back; which would very appropriately designate an arrangement which recalled the absent, restored the captive, and brought back alienated estates. Some trace it to Jubal, the inventor of musical instruments, and suppose that this year was named after him from its being a year of mirth and joy, of which music is a common attendant and expression. Our English word "jovial" may perhaps be traceable to this origin. Others think it a word meant to denote the extraordinary sounding of trumpets with which this particular year was always introduced, some making it refer to the kind of instruments used, and others to the particular kind of note produced. But, after all, it may have been a name invented for the occasion, and intended to carry its meaning in its sound, or to get it from the nature of the period which it was thenceforward to designate. It is a word which, if not in sound, yet in its associations, connects with the sublimest joys, ushered in with thrilling and triumphant proclamations. I. First of all, it is to be a SABBATH—a consecrated and holy rest. The year of jubilee was the intensest and sublimest of the sabbatic periods. The Sabbath is the jewel of days. It is the marked and hallowed seventh, in which God saw creation finished, and the great Maker sat down complacently to view the admirable products of His wisdom, love, and power—blessed type of a still more blessed rest, when He shall sit down to view redemption finished, the years brought to their perfect consummation, and the life of the world in its full and peaceful bloom. The jubilee is therefore to be the crown of dispensations, and the ultimate glory of the ages, when the Son of God shall rest from the long work of the new creation, and sit down with His saints to enjoy it for ever and ever. II. In the next place it is to be THE PERIOD OF RESTITUTION. Everything seemed to go back to the happy condition in which God had originally arranged things. Man, in this present world, is a dispossessed proprietor. God gave him possessions and prerogatives which have been wrested from him. God made him but a little lower than the angels, crowned him with glory and honour, and set him over the works of His hands. All creatures were given to him for his service, and he was to "have dominion over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." But where is all that glory and dominion now? How has the gold faded and the power waned! How much are we now at the mercy of what was meant to serve and obey us! Gone, are our once glorious estates. Gone, the high freedom which once encompassed man. Gone, all the sublime dignity which once crowned him. But we shall not always remain in this poverty and disgrace. Those old estates have not gone from us for ever. When the great joyous trump of jubilee shall sound, the homesteads of our fathers shall return to us again, nor strangers more traverse those patrimonial halls. III. Again, it shall be a TIME OF RELEASE FOR ALL THAT ARE OPPRESSED, IMPRISONED, OR BOUND. The year of jubilee struck off the bonds of every Jewish captive, and threw open the prison doors to all who had lost their liberty. We are all prisoners now. Though the chains of sin be broken, the chains of flesh and remaining corruption still confine us and abridge our freedom. Even those pious ones who have passed away from earth are still held in the power of death. Their souls may be at rest, but their bodies are still shut up in the pit of the grave. There still is groaning and "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." But when the great trump of jubilee shall sound these groanings shall cease and these fetters all dissolve. IV. Another feature of that happy time is, THAT IT SHALL BE A TIME OF REGATHERING FOR THE SCATTERED HOUSEHOLD. It is not possible in this world for families to keep together. A thousand necessities are ever pressing upon us to scatter us out from our homes. The common wants of life, to say nothing of aims and enterprises for good, honour, or distinction, operate to drive asunder the most tenderly attached of households. And if we should even succeed in overcoming dividing forces of this kind, there are others which do their work in a way which we cannot hinder. Death comes, and, one by one, the whole circle is mowed down, and sleep in separate graves, mostly far apart. But there cometh a day when all the households of the virtuous and good shall be complete.

The year of jubilee shall bring back the absent one. For when the Son of man shall come, "He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the one end of heaven to the other." Not one shall be overlooked or forgotten. V. But there is still another feature of this blessed time to come to which I will refer. The sounding of that trumpet shall be THE SUMMONS TO A SACRED FEAST UPON THE STORES LAID UP BY THE INDUSTRY OF PRECEDING YEARS. Though no sowing or gathering was to be done in the year of jubilee, Israel was to have plenty. The bountiful hand of Heaven was to supply them. Years going before were to furnish abundance for all the period of rest. The Sabbath of the land was to be meat for them. Now is our harvest-time. The fields are waving with beautiful golden products which God means that we shall gather and store for our jubilee. Industry and toil are required. We must thrust in the sickle, and gather the blessed sheaves, and lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven. It will not do to play the sluggard while that ripe vintage is inviting us to gather. We must work while we may, and lay up while it is within reach. When once the trumpet sounds it will be too late to begin to lay up for the year of rest. (*J. A. Weiss, D.D.*) *The year sabbath* :—The great year-sabbath carried with it many important advantages and benefits that belonged to no other period; and it is interesting to observe how accurately they all symbolised the blessings conferred by the redemptive work of our Emmanuel. I. ONE OF THESE WAS THE UNIVERSAL EXTINCTION OF DEBT. Here is a man who has inherited from his ancestors a narrow strip of land on the rocky slopes of Mount Ephraim. He cultivates a small vineyard on the hillside, sows a few patches of wheat and barley, and has a few cows and bullocks grazing in his little meadow. With health and good seasons he could supply the modest wants of his household, and escape the necessity of debt. But calamities have befallen him. Under the pressure of his needs he has been compelled to contract debts, hoping that more auspicious days would enable him to discharge them. But those days come not. His creditors grow stern and exacting, demand immediate payment, and threaten to eject him from his heritage, cast him into prison, and sell his children into slavery. Still he struggles on. Yet, toil as he may, he cannot master the difficulties that environ him. The encumbrance is too heavy, the danger too near and too pressing. But just as he is on the point of giving up all further effort and resigning himself to despair, the morning of the jubilee breaks over the land. The joyful acclamations that welcome its coming swell out on the air and reach him among the hills. Blessed sounds are they to him! They tell him that his trials are ended, his home secure; and that, by the benign decree of Israel's God, he may now go forth to his daily labour, safe from the peril that has menaced him so long. Go with me to the debtor's gaol in Jerusalem, and look at another on whom adversity has dealt blows still more terrible. Liable to claims which he could not meet, he was stripped of all that he possessed. There was no kinsman rich enough, or generous enough, to redeem his property or become surety for his person, and his creditors, having the power, shut him up in prison. Many years have passed since then. He has lost all reckoning of time—has forgotten to note the slow years, as they drag wearily by him—forgotten that the hour of deliverance is drawing nigh. The Day of Atonement dawns in the heavens, but he knows it not. He hears the loud trumpets proclaiming the year-sabbath without any thought of their meaning. The door of his cell is thrown open; he is told that the jubilee has come, and that he is free. Rising listlessly from his bed of straw, he looks round amazed and stupefied. The truth at last flashes upon him, and with a low, trembling cry of thanksgiving, he goes forth to tread the green earth once more, to feel the soft breath of spring, and exult in the bright sun and sky. Call to mind how many cases, analogous to those now supposed, there must have been in Israel at each recurrence of the year of release, and you will be able to form some conception of the blessings connected with that sacred season. Nor can you fail to perceive with what force and beauty the feature which we have considered illustrates the grace of the gospel. By our numerous and aggravated sins we have come under tremendous liabilities to the justice of God, and have incurred an amount of obligation which no human arithmetic can compute, and no human efforts can liquidate. Judgment has been entered against us in the court of heaven, execution issued; and the stern messenger, Death, only awaits the Divine signal to bear us away to the dungeons of hell. But in this fearful exigency the Saviour has interposed for our rescue. By faith in His atoning sacrifice our mighty debt is cancelled; the uttermost farthing is paid; the demands of the law are satisfied; and through

the suretyship of Him who died for us, we stand exonerated before the tribunal of Infinite Holiness. II. IN THE YEAR-SABBATH THERE WAS AN END OF BONDAGE. See that slave delving and sweltering in the hot cane-fields of Jericho, condemned to toil through the long summer day under a burning summer sun, without rest, and without reward. His childhood was passed on the breezy heights of Carmel, among babbling brooks, the singing of birds, and the odour of flowers. There he grew up, a bold, free-hearted youth, erect and tall, with an eye keen as a falcon's and a foot fleet as the roe which he chased on the mountain-side. But misfortune, swifter still, overtook him. A ruthless claimant, to whom his parents were indebted, seized him, and doomed him to bondage. Look at him now. Slavery has bowed his strong frame, and stiffened his elastic limbs, and on the brow, once so joyous, sits hopeless gloom. As he bends to his task, what sad memories are busy within him! He thinks of the dear ones far away—of his happy boyhood—of all that he might have been—of the hard lot that has been his instead—and tears, bitter tears, are on his bronzed cheek. But while he thus muses and weeps his ear catches the distant note of a trumpet. Now it is nearer, louder. It comes rolling down the gorges of the wilderness in the way toward Jerusalem, bounding from cliff to cliff, and pouring its jocund waves upon the plain below. Others take up the strain, and send it from wall and housetop, from crag and valley, till the very air seems alive with it. For a moment he listens uncertain; then shouting, "The jubilee, the jubilee!" tears off the badge of his servitude—stands up a freeman—and with the stride of a giant, journeys back to the scenes where his heart has ever been. By nature we are all the subjects of a moral thralldom as grinding as it is criminal. We are the slaves of our own depravity, "sold under sin," and "led by the devil at his will." But the Cross of Christ touches our chains, and they are shivered into fragments; His grace rends the self-livory from our spirits, and we walk forth in the joy of a blessed emancipation.

III. THE JUBILEE BROUGHT WITH IT THE RESTORATION OF PROPERTY. Picture to yourselves an Israelite thrust out by adversity from the inheritance of his ancestors. He has struggled hard to keep the old home; but losses have fallen heavily upon him and he must depart. The roof beneath which he was born, the streams by which he has walked, the fields he has tilled, the trees in whose shade he has reclined, the graves where his fathers sleep, all must be left, and left, alas! in the keeping of strangers. He casts one long, farewell look on the scene which he loves so well, and then, with wife and little ones, goes forth an exile. Years pass on. Farther and farther he wanders, finding no resting-place, and "dragging at each remove a lengthening chain." But, hark! a trumpet-blast breaks upon the air. It is caught up and repeated from city and hamlet, from hill-top and glen, from highways and byways, till the whole land rings with the joyous echo. The wanderer hears it. His heart knows and feels it. It is the jubilee signal. Oh, with what rapture does he now hasten back to the home once more his own! Old friends greet his return; old familiar faces smile upon him; hands that he grasped in youth now grasp his in happy welcome. The days of his exile are over. He is among his kindred again. And what an image is there here of our own restoration by the gospel to the heritage which we have lost! Our condition, as fallen creatures, resembles that of the beggared Jew driven out from his birthright. Our sins have stripped us of our all. The original holiness of our nature, the likeness and favour of God, our kindred with angels, our title to a blessed immortality, are gone, and gone beyond our power to recover. But the mercy of God has provided for us a jubilee. By believing in His only-begotten Son we receive back, ay, more than receive back, our alienated inheritance. We are again invested with a glorious property, and made rich with a wealth which empires could not bestow. IV. THE YEAR-SABBATH WAS INTENDED TO BE A SEASON OF HARMONY AND REPOSE. During its continuance the land was to rest, the implements of husbandry to be put away, and labour to cease, that social intercourse and kindly feeling might be cultivated without restraint. There was to be no strife, no oppression; all disputes were to be laid aside, all contentions abandoned; and society in every rank was to present one unbroken scene of brotherhood and peace. How beautifully does this feature of the sacred year prefigure the results which Christianity contemplates. Its design is to impart to all who truly embrace it a peace which comes from heaven, and is the earnest of heaven, and then to unite them to each other in one harmonious and holy fraternity. All its elements, all its tendencies, are those of union and love. Mankind shall become one great family. Public and private animosities, the jar of conflicting interests, the opposition of classes, the insolence of the rich, the over-

bearing of the strong, shall be remembered only to excite wonder that they could ever have been. Then will be the jubilee of the creation, the great Sabbath of the world. Over the face of humanity, long agitated by wrong, and struggle, and sin, shall come a holy calm; like the quiet of a still eventide after the turmoil of a tempestuous day, when the winds have gone down, and the clouds disappear, and the blue sky breaks forth, and the setting sun sprinkles gold over the smiling land and the sleeping waters. And this universal peace on earth will be the prelude of everlasting peace in heaven. V. One more evangelic analogy of the year-sabbath may be traced in THE EXTENT AND FULLNESS GIVEN TO ITS PROCLAMATION. "Ye shall make the trumpet sound throughout all your land." The manner in which this was done was very interesting and suggestive. As the time for proclaiming the jubilee drew on a company of priests was stationed at the door of the Tabernacle or Temple, each with a silver trumpet in his hand. The Levites in the cities and towns, and every householder in the nation, were also furnished with silver trumpets. When the hour had arrived, the company of priests sounded the appointed signal. Those in their immediate neighbourhood repeated it. It was answered by the Levites and the inhabitants of the next town. And thus it was sent on from dwelling to dwelling, from city to city, from mountain to mountain, from tribe to tribe, till the farthest borders of the land echoed and re-echoed with the glad music. The sounding of the silver trumpets was unquestionably a symbol of the proclamation of the gospel. The ministers of Christ are commanded to publish redemption by His blood, and to invite the disinherited and the ruined to return to their Father's house. And in the work of spreading this message all the people of God are to bear part. The tidings of mercy announced by the priests and Levites are to be taken up by private Christians and carried out into all the walks of life. At the fireside, in the Sabbath-school class, in the social circle, in the resorts of business, the trumpet is to be sounded. Neighbour should sound it to neighbour, village to village, city to city, land to land, until the most distant and secluded spot on the globe has been penetrated by the joyful summons. And the hour is at hand when this blessed consummation shall be realised. Peal out, O trumpet of redemption! along our storm-swept skies, ringing over land and sea, proclaiming the end of sin, the end of travail, and heralding the birth of the new spiritual creation in which dwelleth righteousness. (*Dr. Ide.*) *The purpose of the sabbatical year:*—The principal object of the sabbatical year, at least in the eyes of the Levitical legislator, was not its economic usefulness in invigorating the soil, or any other of the many material advantages which have been attributed to it, but its spiritual significance as a general Sabbath devoted to God; for as the week is a complete cycle for the labour of man, so is the year for the cultivation and produce of the land; and man was to rest every seventh day, and the land every seventh year, in order that, by sacrificing one day's labour and one year's produce, the Israelite might express his gratitude to the mercy of God who blesses his works, and who sustains him during the temporary suspension of his efforts. He was to be reminded that the treasures of the earth were indeed created for the benefit of man, but that he should not use them selfishly and greedily; and on the other hand, that the soil had indeed been laden with God's curse, but that His bounty gives abundance and grants respite from wearying toil. Who will assert that these and similar abstract ideas, which underlie the laws of the sabbatical year were conceived in the early Mosaic age, or could be profitably conveyed to the untutored people who meant to worship their Deliverer by dancing round the golden image of a calf? The views of Philo, who gives the oldest comment on our laws, may be briefly stated. Moses thought the number seven, he observes, worthy of such reverence, being "the pure and ever virgin number," that he ordained in every seventh year the remission of debts in order "to assist the poor, and train the rich to humanity"; he commanded that then the people should leave the land fallow and untilled, and "deliberately let slip out of their hands certain and valuable revenues," in order to teach them not to be "wholly devoted to gain, but even willingly to submit to some loss," and thus to prepare them to bear patiently any mischance or calamity; he desired, moreover, to intimate that it was sinful to weigh down and oppress man with burdens, since even the earth, which has no feelings of pleasure or of pain, was to enjoy a period of relaxation; and that all benefits bestowed upon our fellow-men are sure to meet with reward and requital, since even the inanimate earth, after having been allowed to rest for one year, gratefully returns this favour by producing in the next year much larger crops than usual; just as athletes, by alternating

recreation and exertion "as with a well-regulated harmony," greatly enhance their strength, and are at last able to perform wonders of endurance; or as nature has wisely ordained man to work and to sleep by turns, that he may not be worn out by toil. But the lawgiver's chief object was "humanity, which he thought fit to weave in with every part of his legislation, stamping on all who study the Holy Scriptures a sociable and humane disposition." With this view he "raised the poor from their apparent lowly condition, and freed them from the reproach of being beggars," by "appointing times when, as if they had been deriving a revenue from their own properties, they found themselves in the possession of plenty, being suddenly enriched by the gift of God, who had invited them to share with the possessors themselves in the number of the sacred seven." In these remarks the charitable and moral motives of the sabbatical year are admirably, but its theocratic tendencies imperfectly, unfolded; nor can Philo be expected to appreciate the gradual development manifest in the various Books of the Pentateuch: in the law of Leviticus charity is no more than an incidental and subordinate object. (*M. M. Kalisch, Ph.D.*)

*A sabbath of rest unto the land:—*I. DIVINE OWNERSHIP IN THE SOIL. II. MAN'S HIGHEST INTERESTS ARE NOT MATERIAL AND EARTHLY. III. NEIGHBOURLINESS AND BENEVOLENCE SHOULD BE CULTIVATED. IV. RELIANCE ON GOD, IN IMPLICIT OBEDIENCE TO HIS WILL. To desist from effort to provide for their own maintenance would—1. Elicit their faith in the fatherly care of God. 2. Summon them to a religious use of the time which God had set free from secular toils. 3. Incite them to grateful thoughts of God's dealings with them as His people, and win them to a renewed recognition that they were "not their own," but His, who had redeemed and still cared for them. V. SABBATIC REST: HEAVEN'S GRACIOUS LAW FOR EARTHLY TOILERS. Man needs the Sabbath pause, in order to realise—1. That higher possibilities are opened to him by God's grace, than to be a servant of the soil on which he dwells. 2. That God desires of men the devotion of fixed seasons, and leisurely hours for sacred meditation and fellowship with the skies. (*W. H. Jellie.*)

*The Sabbath of the fields:—*1. Palestine was designed and arranged by God, when He laid the foundations of the earth and divided to the nations their inheritance, to be a natural fortress for the preservation of religious truth and purity; a home in which a covenant people might be trained and educated, in the household of God and directly under His eye, to be zealous of good works themselves, and to be a royal priesthood to mankind—to carry out in their history God's promise to the founder of their race, that in him should all the families of the earth be blessed. And therefore God surrounded it with natural fortifications which kept it separate and secluded—even although placed in the very midst of the most concentrated populations of the world, in the very focus towards which their intercourse with one another radiated—until the objects of the hermit training and discipline of its inhabitants were accomplished. 2. The Jews could not help being a nation of farmers. As a new seed of Adam, subjected to a new trial of obedience, they were placed in this new garden of Eden, to dress and keep it, in order that through their tilling of the ground the wilderness and the solitary place might be made glad, and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose. Their thoughts, bounded on every side by impassable walls, were turned inward upon their own country for the development of patriotism and the formation of a more compact and concentrated national life. Their energies were employed exclusively in the cultivation of the soil, and in developing to the utmost the resources of the land. And very rich and varied were these resources. No other country in the world presented, within a similar limited area, such diversities of soil and climate. 3. It was in beautiful accordance with all these natural provisions of the country for the isolation of the people during the ages of their discipline under God's special care to be the benefactors of mankind, that the remarkable arrangements of the seventh or sabbatical year were Divinely instituted. Every seventh year was holy unto the Lord, as well as every seventh day. During that whole year the entire nation kept holiday. The people were not, indeed, absolutely idle; for that would have proved demoralising, and neutralised the beneficent nature of the whole arrangement. Much of their time was spent in religious observances, and in hearing and studying the law of God. Their attention was directed from their ordinary material affairs to their spiritual concerns. And although all cultivation of arable land was strictly forbidden, they had still to look after their sheep and cattle, and to tend with more or less care their gardens and orchards; while, doubtless, a good portion of their leisure would be occupied with the repair of their houses, implements of husbandry and domestic furniture, and in weaving and the various other economical arts. At the end of a week, or seven of

these sabbaths of the years—or after the lapse of forty-nine years—the sabbatical scale, beginning with the seventh day and going on to the seventh month and the seventh year, received its completion in the year of jubilee. This was the great political sabbath of the people and of the land. The sabbath day was the rest of the individual; the sabbath year was the rest of each farm and household; while the jubilee was the rest of the whole commonwealth, for it was only as a member of the state that each Israelite could participate in its provisions. 4. What was the design of these remarkable sabbatical years, confining our attention solely to their agricultural relations, and leaving out of sight their other provisions? Why were these sabbaths of the fields instituted? The first reason must obviously have reference to the soil itself; for the ladder of all the human relations, social, political, and religious, necessarily rests upon the tilling of the ground. It was to benefit the land itself in the first instance, that the sabbaths of the fields were ordained. The whole arable land of the country was to lie fallow a whole year at fixed recurring intervals, so that during these long periods of rest it might acquire, from the atmosphere, from the operations of the elements and of animal life, and from the decay of the plants which it spontaneously produced, the fertile substances which it had lost. More than most soils, that of Palestine needed this complete periodical rest. Being principally composed of disintegrated limestone, and very loose, light, and dry in its texture, it parted, under the influence of an arid climate, very easily with its phosphates and other fertilising materials. But upon this physical reason there were based very important moral reasons for the sabbaths of the fields. It was required that the whole land should rest periodically, not only that its fertility might be preserved, but also in order to limit the rights and check the sense of property in it. The earth and all the fulness thereof are indeed the Lord's, as the Creator and Preserver of all things; but, in a very special sense, the Land of Promise was His property. He let out His vineyard to husbandmen who should render unto Him the spiritual fruits thereof; and the rent which He required as Superior was, that one year in seven, and one year in forty-nine years, the land should lie fallow—should pass from the yoke of man to the liberty of God—should be offered up a sacrifice, as it were, unto Him upon the great mountain-altar of Palestine. The very abstinence from agricultural work during the sabbaths of the fields—the self-denial in refraining periodically for a whole year to till the ground—the trustfulness needed in looking to God for bread during so long a period of enforced rest—the confidence that He would in previous years secure from the land an increase adequate to meet the strain which the law of the sabbatical year laid upon its productive energies—all this was but a repetition of the conditions annexed to the possession of Eden, namely, that Adam should abstain from eating the forbidden fruit. The sabbaths of the fields were a trial of the faith of the Israelites, a test of their obedience. Only so long as they kept these sabbaths, abstained from eating the forbidden fruit of their fields, did the land yield to them its abundance, and nourish them with its fruits of life. "The land is Mine," said God, when enacting this sabbatical law; "for ye are strangers and sojourners with Me." The Israelites were living as truly a tent life—a life of pilgrims and strangers on earth amid their settled possessions in Canaan—as they had been in their wanderings in the wilderness. But, further still, the sabbaths of the fields connected, in a most beautiful and interesting manner, the agriculture of the Israelites with the institutions of their religion. The law enacting them was given in words corresponding to those of the fourth commandment: the one was only an extension of the other. The natural, social, and spiritual uses of the sabbath day suggested those of the sabbath year. The same sacredness and Divine obligation attached to the one as to the other. Under the theocratic government of Israel, the sanctuary and the farm lay within the same circle of holy influences. But perhaps the most interesting of all the aspects of the sabbaths of the fields was their relation to the future—their prophetic character. As the sabbath day pointed forward to the true and final rest that remaineth to the people of God, so the sabbatical year and the year of jubilee pointed forward to the jubilee of the world—the times of refreshing and the restitution of all things spoken of by all the prophets—the regeneration and the glorious kingdom to be inherited by the true Israel of God when they shall receive back an hundredfold all that they have lost. The sabbath day commemorated the relief of man from the burden of toil imposed upon him because of his sin; the sabbaths of the fields the relief of nature from the curse on the ground for man's sake. The year of rest for worn-out nature was a prefiguration of the change which is in store for the outward world, when every wilderness shall become a fruitful

field, and instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and out of which it shall issue as a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. 5. But, alas! beneficent as it was, a law so peculiar, and requiring so much faith and self-denial, was not thoroughly and uninterruptedly observed. After four centuries of obedience, during which the land preserved its primitive fertility, and there were no famines arising from impoverishment of the soil, but only from unusual droughts and other atmospheric causes, the people ceased to keep the fallow year, not only through want of trust in God's providence amid so peculiar a mode of living, but also through the moral corruption of the times. Then the land, originally the most fertile in the world, became one of the most capricious and uncertain; the store of fertilising materials was rapidly used up by incessant cultivation; and that state of things which Moses foretold took place—"And your strength shall be spent in vain, for your land shall not yield its increase." Famine after famine, some of them of excessive severity and long continuance, arising from the overdriving and exhaustion of the soil, swept over the land and decimated the people. Henceforth the disregard of the sabbatical year became the burden of every prophetic denunciation, and "the voice of historian and prophet was one continual wail of famine." In this painful extremity of the country's fortunes, the judgment threatened by Moses against the violation of the fallow year was inflicted—"And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you, and your land shall be desolate and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest and enjoy her sabbaths. As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest, because it did not rest in your sabbaths when ye dwelt upon it." Throughout the Babylonish captivity there was a continuous fallow of seventy years. During all that long period the fields of Palestine lay desolate, were neither sown nor reaped; and by this timely and much-needed rest the land recovered a large portion of its old fertility. And thus God graciously mingled mercy and judgment; combined the punishment of His people with the renovation of their inheritance. Weary, footsore, in tears, the saddened exiles returned to their native land, taught by their own experience that it is an evil and a bitter thing to sin against God. (*H. Macmillan, D.D.*)

Lessons from the sabbatical year:—I. THAT THE LORD WAS THE SOLE PROPRIETOR OF THE LAND. II. THAT THE LAND HAD RESTING UPON IT, CONTINUALLY, THE FAVOUR OF THE LORD. III. THAT THE DIVINE FAVOUR PROVIDES FOR THE WELL-BEING OF EVERY LIVING THING. IV. THAT OF EVERY LIVING THING, MAN IS THE NEAREST AND DEAREST TO THE GREAT CREATOR. V. THAT THE GREAT CREATOR TEACHES MORAL TRUTHS TO MAN BY MEANS OF WORKS OF NATURE. (*F. W. Brown.*)

The year of jubilee.—*The jubilee year: its fourfold significance:*—I. THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION OF GOSPEL LIBERTY AND REST (see Luke iv. 18-21). II. THE BELIEVER'S PRIVILEGED LIFE OF SACRED RELEASE AND JOY (*cf.* Eph. i. 13, 14; Heb. iv. 9; viii. 12). III. THE MILLENNIAL AGE, OF ESTABLISHED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE (see Isa. lxvi. 18-23; Rev. xx. 2-4). IV. THE HEAVENLY STATE OF ETERNAL SECURITY AND SERENITY (see 2 Pet. iii. 13; Rev. xiv. 13; xxi. 4). In the application of the jubilee incidents to each of these grand fulfilments of its symbolism, the following facts stand out clearly:—1. Bounty. God gave a supernatural abundance the year preceding the jubilee, that in the enjoyment of vast supplies there should be no necessity for toil, no occasion for care (see ver. 21). And assuredly there is—(1) Bounty in the provisions of the gospel (1 Tim. i. 14). (2) Fulness of grace for the believer in Jesus (2 Cor. iv. 15; Titus iii. 6). (3) Abundance of good to be enjoyed in the millennial age (Psa. lxxii. 7). (4) Limitless bliss in the heavenly land (Psa. xvi. 2). 2. Rest. That sabbatic year was to be consecrated to repose; the land was to be allowed to rest; the toiler was to cease from toil. Every want was supplied without the weariness of labour. Equally true of the—(1) Gospel rest which Christianity announces (Matt. xi. 29). (2) Believer's rest which faith secures (Heb. iv. 3). (3) Millennial rest for a wearied Church (Rev. xx. 2, 3). (4) Heavenly rest for Christ's redeemed followers (Rev. xiv. 13). 3. Liberty. All bondservants were set free the moment the jubilee trumpet sounded (vers. 39-44). And assuredly this finds verification in the—(1) Liberty which Christ proclaimed to souls enslaved in sin and fear (Luke iv. 18; Heb. ii. 15). (2) Spiritual freedom realised by faith (Rom. vii. 15; John viii. 36). (3) Emancipation from thralldom which shall distinguish the millennial reign (Isa. xlix. 8, 9). (4) Glorious liberty of the children of God in heaven (Rom. viii. 21; Rev. xxi. 24, 25). 4. Restitution. If the Israelite had parted with his inheritance, its possession was restored to him in the year of jubilee, and that without payment (vers. 25-37). So—(1) The

redemption of Christ recovers for man all that sin had forfeited. (2) Believers in Jesus regain all the virtue, happiness, and hopes which the fall had ruined. (3) The weary and wronged world would enjoy paradisaal gladness through Christ's millennial sway. (4) Heaven will realise all which on earth had been desired, and restore all which death had desolated. V. Let it be marked that the jubilee, with all its blessings, was CONSEQUENT UPON ATONEMENT. Not till the blood of expiation had been shed, and the living goat had borne into the land of oblivion the sins which (ceremonially) had been transferred to it, did the silver trumpets peal forth their exultant notes, proclaiming liberty and rest, restitution and rectitude for the people. And it is because of Christ's atonement that—(1) Christianity has come to sinful man, with all its tidings of good and wealth of salvation (John i. 29; Eph. i. 6). (2) Spiritual blessings are inherited by the believer in Jesus (Rom. v. 11). (3) The Church will enjoy the sabbatic millennial glory (Rev. xix. 11-14). (4) Heaven will be the eternal possession of the redeemed (Rev. viii. 14-17). (*W. H. Jellie.*) *The year of jubilee*.—I. LET US LOOK AT THE GOSPEL AGE AS THE WORLD'S JUBILEE. And notice particularly that the jubilee year was ushered in on the Day of Atonement. Now, how is it with our jubilee? Was it not also ushered in by atonement? The prophets foretold the coming of the acceptable year, but there was no jubilee until Christ came, and there was no true trump of jubilee until after Christ had died. Three days He lay in the grave, and the third day He rose again, and then after forty days He ascended, the Great High Priest, and entered into the Holiest Place, bearing there His own blood. Then, the atonement having been made, He sends down the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and His servants go forth everywhere preaching the jubilee that had come in—a jubilee based upon an infinite atonement. Now, it is equally true that the atonement of Christ must usher in all gospel proclamations. There is no gospel without the atonement, any more than there was any trump of jubilee without first the atonement day. A bloodless gospel is no gospel, but hell's choicest weapon. A gospel that ignores the Lamb slain is worse than no gospel at all, for it not merely leaves men in their original ignorance, but stupefies and chloroforms them with a fresh lie. Let us look for a moment at a few of the chief things included in gospel preaching, and see how they are all connected with the great day of Christ's atonement. 1. Certainly, peace must be classed among the first and chiefest notes. The gospel, like an angel, flies through the world, crying, "Peace!—Peace!—Peace!" Methinks, this is one of the sweetest notes in the whole of gospel harmony. But what kind of peace is the gospel peace? It is peace that is based on blood! 2. If peace be one of the chief notes in the gospel, surely we may place by its side remission of sins. Oh, let us tell it out that God can forgive all sin, though He cannot overlook one. By all means tell it out that God can remit all iniquity—that there is no sinner so wicked that God cannot forgive him, no sin so heinous that it cannot be pardoned; but remember, remission of sins, like peace, is based on the blood. 3. Cleansing is also one of the most sounded notes of the gospel, and it is a blessed thing to be able to tell a sinner that however sin-stained he is he can yet be purified, and that the soul that is crimson dyed with iniquity may yet be so cleansed that even the driven snow shall look black in comparison. But remember that it is the blood that cleanses. Now, notice next, that the jubilee was proclaimed with trumpet-note. The atonement has been made, and from every hill-top the note is heard. 1. And who blows the trumpet? Why, man. It must have been joyous work to him. No angel but would have coveted the honour, but it is man that receives the commission for the work, and surely, he will blow it best, for as he blows he says, "I am blowing good news unto myself." Perhaps the man on yonder hill-top owed a debt and knew not how to pay. Oh, with what right good will would that man blow the trumpet! Says he, "I am blowing my own debt away." Or perhaps that other man had a boy that was in prison. Says he, "I will blow a blast that shall be heard far and wide, for I am blowing a note that will open the prison doors to my own boy." He had got an exile, perhaps, afar off, and for family reasons that boy had been unable to return home. "The moment this note is heard," says the trumpeter, "the exiled one will be able to come back again." So the man blows, ay, as no angel or seraph could have blown. So no angel could preach the gospel like the man who is himself saved by the gospel. When we preach Christ we may well preach Him with a holy ecstasy, for we preach that which saves us; and when we are telling the tale of atonement made we may tell it out with all the whole soul.

The trumpets were blown by man. 2. And then observe, they were blown everywhere. This is what you and I have to do. We have to help to sound the trumpet throughout all the land. Go, blow it amongst the great ones of the earth, and tell kings and potentates that they must be born again. Go and blow the note amongst the humblest and the poorest that fill our mission halls and theatres and tell how Christ can save the vilest. Go and be Christ-like, and proclaim to the perishing everywhere that the acceptable year of the Lord is come, and that He is willing to bind up broken-hearted ones, and to open the prison-doors unto all captives. 3. We notice further that the notes of the jubilee trumpet and the notes of the gospel are identical. What was it that that trumpet proclaimed? First and foremost it proclaimed a return to all exiles and to all who were banished from their homes. I think I see the father when that trumpet sounds; he pulls the bolt back and takes the chain down and says, "My boy will be back soon. For years he has been shut out of the home. We did not care to have him in." That boy perhaps had offended in something, and did not care to show his face in the neighbourhood, so for many a long year the father had sighed to see his face again. But the moment he heard that note he says, "See that the door is not fastened till he comes back. My boy has heard the note as quickly as I have. Depend upon it that by this time his face is turned homeward." The trumpet sounded "home sweet home," to all banished ones. There was a pale captive in a dungeon; but the trumpet note found its way between the iron bars, and I think I see him as he says, "Now jailor, off with these fetters! and off with them quickly! You have no power to keep me in durance vile a moment longer." See how he flings the shackles down on the floor and stretches his unfettered arms with ecstasy! That trump said to him the one glorious word "Liberty!" These were some of the notes that the trumpet of jubilee sounded; but, oh, does not the gospel trumpet sound not merely the same notes, but the same notes pitched to a higher "Selah," still. II. NOW WHEN DOES THE SOUL RECEIVE ITS JUBILEE? I can imagine one saying, "Well, my case is a very bad one indeed. It is all very well to be talking about a jubilee age, but that and a jubilee heart are two different things." I know it, and I think I can understand you. Do I not express your feelings when I put the matter thus:—"I am everything that you have spoken about, I am an exile far from my Father's house, I am a captive, and the iron eats into my soul. I am a debtor, and I feel that I owe that which I can never pay. I am over head and ears; I am drowned in debt. I am a miserable bankrupt. I cannot pay a farthing in the pound. I am a lost man. How am I ever to have a jubilee?" Why, I tell thee, thou wilt have a jubilee the very moment thou believest the report of the jubilee trumpet. Thank God, the jubilee of the soul can come any day. It is not once in fifty years, or once in fifty days, or once in fifty hours, or once in fifty minutes. God is willing to give salvation any moment. The moment thou acceptest Christ, the moment thou believest the report of the gospel, that moment shall thy jubilee come. Remember, that it is not enough to have the gospel preached all round about you. It is not enough to live in a gospel age. There must be a personal reception of the truth. (*A. G. Brown.*) *The jubilee*:—I. THE TENDENCY OF SOCIETY TO DO WRONG. The evils remedied by the jubilee were—1. Debt. 2. Slavery. 3. Destitution. 4. Exhausting toil. II. THE CONSTANT INTERPOSITION OF GOD TO PUT SOCIETY RIGHT. (*Homilist.*) *The year of jubilee*:—I. MAN'S NEED OF OCCASIONAL REST FROM TOIL. The Hebrew system was remarkable for the number and variety of its provisions for this. By the emphasis thus given to rest, God hallowed it as being both a duty and privilege. It is needful in this age of excessive labour, when the struggle for wealth consumes men's energies so fast, and makes them so weary and prematurely old and broken. We can think of many who ought to take a sabbatic year of rest, and then add to it a year of jubilee. II. ALL MEN ARE ENTITLED TO A SHARE OF GOD'S BOUNTY. Men were not allowed in the jubilee year to store up aught of what grew in the fields. God was manifestly the sole author of it. It was to be distributed, therefore, like the other pure bounties of His hand, like the rain and the sunshine, to all alike. This happened every sabbatic year, as well as in the jubilee. Christian faith endorses this. The fact of holding a title to a piece of land does not warrant one in engrossing to himself all that it yields. Christian charity says, "Distribute the benefit of it." III. THE WELFARE OF SOCIETY IS IMPERILLED BY THE ACQUISITION OF GREAT LANDED ESTATES. The operation of the jubilee was to prevent the accumulation of land in the hands of a few. If in the course of fifty years such an accumulation occurred, the jubilee redistributed it. The public good demanded its general division among the people. Great Britain

suffers greatly from excessive concentration in the ownership of land. The principle of charity, if given full operation, would restrain excessive accumulation.

IV. THE DIGNITY OF MAN VIEWED AS A RANSOMED CHILD OF GOD IS ANOTHER IDEA EMBODIED IN THE JUBILEE (ver. 42). (*A. H. Currier.*) *The year of jubilee*:—

I. ITS ORIGIN. It stands connected with two of the leading Jewish institutions. 1. With the weekly sabbath. It comes from the sabbath by two steps; first, by the institution of a sabbath for the land, falling on every seventh year; and secondly, by the conferring of a special sanctity on the seventh of these land sabbaths. 2. With the Day of Atonement. II. ITS PROVISIONS. Restoration—1. Debtor released from debts. 2. Slave released from bondage. 3. Exile restored to inheritance. III. ITS LESSONS FOR OURSELVES. 1. The coming of Christ was the inauguration of a greater jubilee, bringing world-wide and lasting blessings. We too are debtors, debtors to the law in the whole round of its requirements; we are slaves to sin and Satan; we have forfeited our fair inheritance of innocence and heaven. But hear how Christ ushers in His ministry (Luke iv. 16-21). 2. With us as with the Jews it is still on the Day of Atonement that the jubilee trumpet sounds. Our liberty and restoration have been dearly won (1 Pet. i. 18, 19). With the Jews the neglect of the Day of Atonement led to the loss of the jubilee. And if the atonement of which we speak so much has never yet been anything to us, in our sense of the need of it, in our quest after the blessing of it, to us there has been no jubilee—we are yet in our sins. Will we be less in earnest than the debtor or the slave when we have so much more need to be in earnest? (*Walter Roberts, M.A.*) *The year of jubilee*:—I. ITS PECULIAR FEATURES. 1. It was a great boon to all sorrowing ones. (1) Every captive was liberated. (2) The exiled wanderer returned. (3) The oppressed debtor was released from his debts. (4) The unfortunate poor were restored to their ancestral heritage. (5) Families that had been separated were now reunited. (6) Every estate reverted to the families to whom they were originally allotted in the conquest of Canaan. 2. All this was intimately connected with the Day of Atonement. 3. It was to be a year of perfect freedom from toil. 4. Every business transaction had reference to the year of jubilee. II. ITS TYPICAL MEANING. 1. It has special reference to the millennial glory of Israel in the land which Jehovah keeps for them through all generations. (1) God claims Canaan as He does no other. (2) God has honoured Canaan as He has no other. (a) There His throne and sanctuary were. (b) There His priests ministered, and His prophets spoke. (c) There His own Son was born, grew up, worked, wept, suffered, died, and rose again. (d) When Jesus returns, His feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives. 2. It is a beautiful and correct type of heaven. (1) Where every believer will enter upon his inheritance, and enter into his perfect rest. (2) Where all exile, captivity, separation, poverty and oppression will for ever cease. (*D. C. Hughes, M.A.*) *The jubilee; or, The degenerative and corrective forces of society*:—I. THE DEGENERATIVE FORCES OF SOCIETY ARE IN ITSELF. Debt. Slavery. Poverty. Materialism. II. THE CORRECTIVE FORCES OF SOCIETY ARE FROM GOD. 1. Man is superior to property. The violation of this truth is the ruin of society, and it is violated every day. 2. God is the disposer of property. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." 3. Society has higher wants than property. Spiritual services. (*Homilist.*) *The resemblance between the year of jubilee and the gospel*:—I. IN THE BLESSINGS IMPARTED. 1. Remission of debts (see Acts xiii. 38). 2. Liberation from bondage (see Rom. vi. 22). 3. Restoration of forfeited possessions (see 1 Pet. i. 4). 4. Freedom from toil (see Heb. iv. 3). 5. Abundant provisions and universal joy (see 1 Pet. i. 8). II. THE JUBILEE WAS TO BE PROCLAIMED ON A PARTICULAR DAY AND IN A PECULIAR WAY. 1. On the Day of Atonement (ver. 9; see Luke xxiv. 46, 47). 2. It was announced by the sound of trumpets (ver. 9; see Rom. x. 14, 15). The proclamation was to be to all (see Mark xvi. 15). III. THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE GOSPEL DISPENSATION AS EXPERIENCED BY BELIEVERS. 1. The personal enjoyment of liberty (see Rom. viii. 21; Gal. v. 1). (1) Liberty from Satan. (2) From the world. (3) From mental darkness and sin. 2. The realisation of rest (see Isa. xiv. 3). (1) Rest in Christ. (2) From works. (3) In labour. (4) In prospect. 3. The possession of abundance (see Rom. v. 20, 21). (1) The word. (2) The sacraments. (3) Joy. (4) Holy Ghost. (5) Glory. 4. The enjoyment of salvation (see Isa. xii. 2). (1) Present salvation. (2) Perfect and complete salvation. (3) Everlasting and infinite salvation. (*T. B. Baker.*) *The joyful sound*:—One interpretation of the word "jubilee" connects it, in a wild sort of way, with a rabbinical legend concerning the ram caught in the thicket, at the time when

Abraham was tempted to sacrifice his son Isaac. It was fabled in the foolish tradition that the body of this animal was burned to ashes, but God raised it to life again afterwards by miracle. Then out of its skin was made the mantle that Elijah wore in the wilderness; out of its entrails were fashioned strings for the harp which David played upon. From one of its horns was constructed the trumpet which was blown upon Mount Sinai; from the other, the trumpet which remained to be blown at the coming of the Messiah. So some of the early commentators said that the term "jubilee" was derived from an Arabic word that signified a ram. But the latter and better interpretation is referred to an expression in the Book of Joshua (vi. 5). There the verse would read, rendered literally, "as they draw out with the horn of jubilee." The meaning seems to be, that this name of "jubilee" was not given to the instrument exactly, but to the note it uttered—the peculiar clanging, continuous, vibrating sound of a horn. The word most likely represents the prolonged, quick-rushing, far-reaching, deeply penetrating blast of the trumpet as it swept across the whole land. As we press into the investigation of this most interesting portion of Hebrew history, we must pause long enough at the beginning to insist on the connection of the great Day of Atonement with the great Day of Jubilee. It came right after it in date. It appears right after it in the record of institution; and in spiritual teaching it is indispensably associated with it. There can be no jubilee in God's universe till atonement for sin is completed.

I. THE TYPE. 1. What was the design of the jubilee year as God gave it? A necessary question this is, but the answer will not be difficult if we take into consideration the entire story of the institution. In general, it appears to have been placed in the midst of human life as a barrier against the three greatest ills humanity is heir to. It insisted on relief from overwork. One grand idea of the ordinance was rest—rest to the soil, rest to the toilers upon it. The jubilee also demanded deliverance from oppression. There will be found reward for the closest study in just searching out in detail the skilful provisions made to relieve the weight of every kind of bond-service permitted in those times. A consideration for such exigency is inserted in the commandment. There is one for the "brother," and one for the "stranger," and one for the "sojourner." All servants are here declared to be God's servants, as the whole land is declared to be God's land. And in this great year of grace the time has come for all slaves to go free—free for ever. The jubilee likewise ordered release from obligation. Among all the weights and worries of human life surely one of the cruellest is debt. "Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?" It is only natural that they should; for human nature knows little change. The wisest man in the world once said plainly: "The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender." Here again is an intervention from heaven in behalf of distressed debtors. The law made provision for the restoration of estates, and clearance from usury at the end of the fiftieth year. 2. What was the welcome of the jubilee as the people gave it reception? There can be but one answer: A great glad day of universal rejoicing it was through the length and breadth of the land.

II. THE ANTITYPE. In general, it may be said that the sound of those trumpets was the symbol of the proclamation of Christ's gospel over all the earth. The purpose of this gospel was to check the deteriorating forces in human society; to set up principles which would deliver men from all weights and oppressions of sin and sinners. 1. So there is such a thing as a jubilee in the heart. When the bondage of corruption is broken, the debt of transgression paid, the handwriting that was against us (Col. ii. 14) taken away and nailed to the Cross, the soul freed indeed because freed by the truth, our Redeemer surely coming (Job xix. 25) and certain to stand on the earth—then it is that there seems to sound a great joy of deliverance through all the nature of the regenerate man! 2. There is such a thing as a jubilee in the Church. Times have been in history when piety was low, and godly men failed; the ways of Zion mourned, the city sat solitary, the fires on the altars were dim in the ashes. Then came a rushing sound of spiritual presence, almost like a pressure, and a blast of silver trumpets, calling to activity, to penitence, to singing, and to religious life again. The Redeemer came to Zion (Isa. lix. 20), and unto them that turned from transgression in Jacob. 3. There is such a thing as a jubilee in the state. Poets are singing about, "the good time coming"; but it has not yet arrived. Still, it is promised (Isa. lxi. 1, 2). 4. There is such a thing as a jubilee in the world. This is the final restitution, the day of all days on the earth. Of course, the blessing will come through the Church; but the whole race will share something of

its vast benediction. (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *The jubilee a type of the gospel* :—

I. ITS PRIMARY PURPOSE. 1. Kind and benevolent. 2. Wise and politic. 3. Good and beneficial. II. ITS TYPICAL REFERENCE. 1. The jubilee of grace. 2. The jubilee of glory. III. ITS JOYFUL COMMENCEMENT (*Psa. lxxxix. 15*). (*Wm. Sleight.*) *Jubilee gladness* :—The Old Testament jubilee was meant to be a type of the entire New Testament dispensation in three points, imaging by its sabbatic character the gospel rest in Christ, by its unreserved deliverance of captives and slaves the Christian redemption from guilt and spiritual bondage, and by its universal restitution of property to the poor and needy the fulness of that inheritance which is treasured up for all the faithful in Christ, whose unsearchable riches, like the national possessions, opened up by the jubilee, enrich all, without impoverishing any who make good their title. I. The first element of jubilee gladness, common to the Jew of old and the Christian amid the celebrations of the gospel age, is THE JOY OF DISTINCTION OR OF PRIVILEGE. There was not a single memorial of blessing or promise, temporal or spiritual, which the jubilee did not recall, and hold up before the eyes of that most favoured nation, so that it was on God's part an impressive reiteration of His covenant, and on their part a grateful recognition that they were indeed a "chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people." The Christian Church, and we as members of it, are privileged—1. As to safety. 2. As to character. 3. As to work. 4. As to suffering. II. The second great element of the gladness of jubilee is THE JOY OF STABILITY AND PROGRESSION. Traces of progress are to be found in every leading country of the Christian world. The last half century has seen the cause of missions pass through all its phases, and encounter all its perils from ridicule, neglect, hope deferred, till now it ranks perhaps as the most distinctive and glorious feature of our age. III. The third element in the jubilee gladness is THE JOY OF ANTICIPATION OR CONSUMMATION. We believe that faith and hope shall in God's own time effect a marvellous conquest of this long-revolted earth, and that love, working in a united and purified Church, shall through great periods gather up and treasure the spoils of victory. But it is to Christ's coming that we look forward and hasten, as the crown and consummation of Christian hope. (*J. Cairns.*) *Land tenure* :—All men ultimately get their living out of the soil. There never will be a process by which the original elements that enter into food will be manufactured into food. We may fly in the air, or travel around the earth with the sun; but we shall never take the unorganised substances that form grass and grain and the flesh of animals, and directly convert them into food; they must first be organised into vital forms. Hence, questions pertaining to land are the most imperative that come before men. To get man rightly related to the soil, in such a way that he shall most easily get his food from it, this is the underlying question of all history, its keynote and largest achievement. The chief struggles in all ages and nations have turned upon this relation. There are two forces at work in the matter, both proceeding out of what seems almost an instinct for ownership of the soil. The earth is our mother, and she woos us perpetually to herself. To own some spot of land, and be able to say, "This is mine," is one of the sweetest of personal feelings; it declares our kinship with this natural world that nurses our life and upholds our feet. These two forces that draw men to the soil are, first, a natural, almost instinctive sense of keeping close to the source of life, as a wise general does not allow himself to be separated from his supplies. The other force is the pride and greed and love of power of the strong. Here is a triple-woven force out of which has sprung by far the greater part of the injustice and oppression that have afflicted the race. The possession of the soil is the surest exponent and standing-ground of worldly force. Everything else may fail: the hearts of men, coined treasures, ships and houses, bonds and promises to pay, but so long as society keeps a man in the possession of land he is so far forth strong; he has a place to stand in, the fortifications built by nature, and the arms and defences that spring perpetually out of the earth; he realises the fable of Antæus. The remarkable feature of the Jewish Commonwealth is its anticipatory legislation against probable, and otherwise certain abuses. The struggles of other nations, and the skill of statesmanship, have been to correct abuses; in the Jewish Commonwealth they were foreseen and provided against. There are no words to express the wonder felt by the student of social science as he first measures the significance of that feature of the Jewish state known as the year of jubilee. It is little understood, hidden away in an uninteresting book, stated in ancient and blind phraseology, a thing of long past ages, nevertheless it remains the most exalted piece of statesmanship the world has known—an example

of social sagacity, and broad, far-reaching wisdom, such as we look for in vain in the annals of any other nation. It settled at the outset the problem that no other people ever solved except through ages of struggle and revolution. The Hebrew nation existed under the consciousness of a covenant with Jehovah. It would be a petty criticism that pried into the origin of this belief, moved by contempt at the seeming presumption of this little nation of fugitive slaves—petty and narrow indeed! It were wiser and more scientific to regard every nation as under covenant with God, if it but had the wisdom to know it. That this nation discerned the eternal fact, and wrought it into the foundations of their State, only shows its insight into the nature of the State, and its receptivity of inspired truth. It does not lessen the wisdom of this legislation that it probably did not meet the exigencies of the later development of the nation, nor even that its details may have become a hindrance in the more complex state of society that followed the captivity when it probably ceased to be enforced. Its wisdom is to be found in its previsionary features, in its reversal of ordinary history, that is, it planted the nation on equal rights at the outset instead of leaving them to be achieved by struggle, and in its assertion of the general principle that it is wise to keep the body of the people as near the source of their subsistence as possible. It was not given up until it had educated and grounded the nation in those conceptions of practical righteousness that are found in the pages of the prophets, through whom they have become the inspiration of the world. Its design and effect are evident. It was a bar to monopoly of the land. All greed and pride in this direction were limited. One might add field to field for a series of years, but after a time the process ceased and the lands went back to their original owners. The purpose was to make such a habit unprofitable, to keep the resources of society evenly distributed, to prevent the rich from becoming too rich and the poor hopelessly poor, to undo misfortune, to give those who had erred through sloth or improvidence an opportunity to improve the lessons of poverty, to prevent children from reaping the faults of their parents; one generation might squander its portion but the next was not forced to inherit the consequences. Though a political measure, it is informed with spiritual significance. It is throughout instinct with mercy. It taught humanity. It rebuked and repressed the great sins. It was in keeping with the underlying fact of the national history which was deliverance, and, as well, with the central idea of the world, which is redemption, redemption from evil however caused and of whatever kind. It was an assertion of perpetual hope, hope which, though long delayed, comes at last to all, and every man returns to the possessions his Creator gave him. It was in its profoundest meaning a prophecy wrought into the practical economy of a nation. It shadows forth the recovery from evil, the undoing of all burdens that weigh down humanity, the eternal inheritance awaiting God's children when his cycle is complete. This ancient piece of statesmanship is full of pointed lessons for these modern times. It cannot be reproduced in form, but it still teaches the ever necessary lesson, that nations and corporations and individuals are always forgetting, that the world belongs to all men by the gift of God. It teaches the wisdom of showing mercy to the poor and unfortunate, and the unwisdom of permitting endless monopolies and limitless increase of wealth. It is the business of the State to see that these things are restricted, as both right and safe, as necessary for the rich as for the poor. The methods employed may sometimes seem to lack in technical justice, but there is a righteousness that lies back of formal justice. As the world goes, the forms of justice are apt to become the instruments of oppression in the hands of the avaricious, the proud, and the strong. These three always lie in wait to oppress the poor, the humble, and the weak; and their choicest instruments are those legal forms and institutions that are necessary to society. But they have their limits by a law which is above all such laws and formal institutions. When wealth oppresses the poor, or keeps them at the mere living point, when monopolies tax the people, whenever a few own the soil, however legal the form of possession, when there is any process going on by which the rich are growing richer and the poor poorer, there is a Divine justice above all formal justice, that steps in and declares that such processes must stop. (*T. T. Munger.*) *The year of jubilee:*—The principal and distinguishing point in the jubilee year was, that all landed property reverted to its original possessors. The institution was this: the people coming as a whole people, consisting of distinct tribes and families, and settling down upon the territory, God says, "This land is Mine; I give it to you, in distinct portions for your distinct families, never to be alienated." So that the

proper way of putting it, in our modern language, would be that the land, the freehold of any estate never could be sold, but only the produce of it for so many years. It never could go entirely out of the family to whom it belonged. But the price to be given would vary according to the nearness or the distance of the jubilee year; according to the number of years till that time, less or more would be paid for the produce of the land; for when that time came the lands were given up by those who had bought the produce of them till then, and everybody went back to his original paternal possession. Houses that were built in villages, and connected with the open field, were subject also to that law; and they went back. But houses that were built in cities were not subject to that law. At any time during the years that preceded the jubilee, any portion of land, any field or farm, could be redeemed; if the man that had parted with it could go and offer the money it was worth, he could demand it; any of his relatives could redeem it in the same way. They could only do this for one year with a house in a city; after that it went from them entirely. But the principal point in the jubilee year was this liberty, this remission of debts, this return of everybody to their original inheritance, which might have been parted with by vice, by improvidence, by indiscretion, or which might have gone from them by misfortune and unavoidable vicissitude. The objects of this very peculiar institution, I think it is fair to suppose, might be such as these. It was intended to produce a recollection in the mind of the people, of the manner in which God had brought them in, and settled them there, and given them their possessions; and of course, of their peculiar covenant relation to Him. It would have a tendency also to prevent the rise of a large landed power, that might become an oppressive and tyrannical aristocracy. It would certainly have a tendency also to make the people very careful about their genealogies, in order that they might easily establish their claim to such and such property. And that, we think—the distinctness and clearness of the genealogy with respect to the tribes and families—had also a bearing upon the prophecies respecting the Messiah and His coming through a particular tribe and family. It was intended, perhaps, or at least it would have that tendency, even to mitigate the evils that men by their indiscretion and improvidence might bring upon themselves and upon their families; give to them, as it were, another chance of recovering themselves, or at least to their descendants, of recovering possessions that ought to have been kept. And altogether, the influence of it would be, I think, to diffuse a very humanising and kind and happy feeling throughout the whole community. (*T. Binney.*)

Results of jubilee year:—It was in ancient Israel, as in the heavens above us, whose luminaries, after a certain period of time has elapsed, always return to the same place in the firmament, and the same relative position to each other. The sun, for instance, although changing his place daily, shall rise and set, twelve months from this date, at the same hour, and appear at his meridian in the same spot as to-day. Corresponding to that, or like the revolution of a wheel, which restores every spoke to its former place, society, whatever change meanwhile took place in personal liberty or hereditary property, returned, among the old Hebrews, to the very same state in which it was at the commencement of those fifty years whose close brought in the jubilee. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*)

Liberty through Christ:—It is a sad sight to see men bound with chains, so that they cannot use their limbs. And if they are shut up in prison, as well as bound with chains, this is still more sad. But there are chains and prisons for the souls of men, as well as for their bodies. If we give way to any sin, that sin binds our souls so that they can have no more freedom of action than our bodies would have if they were bound in chains of iron. This is what is meant in one of the beautiful collects of our Church, in which we pray that we may “be delivered from the bands of those sins which by our frailty we have committed.” And this is the reason why the Bible speaks of men as being “taken captive by Satan at his will” (2 Tim. ii. 26). He tempts men to commit sins, and then binds them in the chains of those sins; and in this way they are made his prisoners or captives. And when Jesus seeks a poor sinner, and converts him by His grace; when He delivers him from the power of his sins, changes his heart, and helps him to lead a new life, then it is that He is blessing that man by giving liberty to the captive. But there are no chains that Satan makes for men so strong as those which he fastens on the soul of the poor drunkard. He is bound hand and foot. The prison in which he is made captive has walls so thick, and doors so strongly bolted and barred, that he never can get out by any efforts of his own. But Jesus is able to break the strongest chain by which any poor drunkard was

ever bound, and to open the prison door in spite of all the bolts and bars that may secure it. Here is an illustration of this statement, which I know to be true. One day, while Mr. Moody was preaching in our city, I received a letter written by a person who signed himself "A Reformed Drunkard." He wished me to read this letter in the noonday meeting for the encouragement of those who were trying to break loose from the chains by which the drunkard is bound. And I did read it there. The writer of this letter called to see me before I read it in public, that I might be sure it was all right. I was surprised at his appearance when I saw him. He was as fine-looking, gentlemanly a man as I had ever seen. He was intelligent and well educated. This was his story, as briefly as I can give it. "My family," he said, "is one of the most respectable in Philadelphia. They belong to the Society of Friends. My mother, now in heaven, was formerly a preacher in the Society. For seven years I had been a confirmed drunkard. By this terrible evil I had lost my money, my business, my character, my health, my friends, and my self-respect. It had even separated me from my wife and family, and made me an outcast from society. I was lost to all that was good. I had tried again and again to stop drinking, but in vain. I had taken different medicines, and had signed the temperance pledge a number of times, but without any benefit. Everybody said my case was hopeless. At last, when I was in a public hospital, sick with that dreadful disease which drunkenness causes, called delirium tremens, and was given up to die; then, as I believe, in answer to the prayers of my sainted mother, I was led to look to Jesus. I called on Him for help. He heard my cry, and helped me. By the power of His grace He broke the strong chains of that dreadful sin by which I had been bound, and which nothing but the grace of God can break. I rose from my sick bed a changed man. By the help which Jesus gave me I was able to stop drinking. And now for months I have been a sober man. I am restored to health, to happiness, and usefulness, to my friends and to my family, and am on the way to heaven, where I hope to meet that beloved mother through whose prayers I have been saved." Such was this man's story. Here we see how Jesus gives deliverance to the captives. And what He did for this poor prisoner of sin and Satan He is able and willing to do for all who call upon Him. And if He has power to help men in this way, then it may well be said that He was "sent to bless them." (*Richard Newton, D.D.*)

The sinner's chains are self-forged:—It is told of a famous smith of mediæval times, that having been taken prisoner and immured in a dungeon, he conceived the idea of escaping, and began to examine the chain that bound him, with a view to discover some flaw that might make it easier to be broken. His hope was vain, for he found, from marks upon it, that it was one of his own workmanship, and it had always been his boast that none could ever break a chain that he had forged. And now it was his own chain that bound him. It is thus with the sinner. His own hands have forged the chain that binds him, a chain which in endless and ever-multiplying coils is around his soul, and which no human hand can break. Yet is there a hand can break it—the hand of Him who brings "liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." (*Preacher's Lantern.*)

Freedom through Christ:—It is stated on good authority that when the old Emperor of Russia died, he made the present Emperor promise to set all those serfs free. So the present emperor called the Imperial Council together, and said, "I want to see if you can make some plan by which we can set these men free." They were the proprietors of these serfs, and, of course, they didn't want to free them. The Imperial Council was in session for six long months, and one evening they sent in their decision, sealed, that it was not right, and it is said that he went down to the Greek Church, partook of the sacrament, and went to his palace; and the next morning there was a great commotion, and people could not understand it. Great cannons were brought up around his palace, and in a little while 65,000 soldiers were gathered around the royal palace; and just at twelve o'clock at midnight there came out what we call a proclamation, but what they call a *ukase*, to the serfs of Russia, that they were free for ever. It spread through the empire, and a shout went through the nation, "The men born in slavery are set free!" They had found one that had set them free. Wasn't that good news? But here is the news of the gospel, that every man born in sin, and taken captive by Satan, can be set free through the power of the Lord Jesus. (*T. De Witt Talmage.*)

Deliverance from sin:—Sin is the great evil of the world. It has infected all hearts, and there is none righteous—no, not one. This is the witness of Scripture: "All have sinned and come short of the

glory of God." But it needs no revelation to tell men this. The wise ones of the heathen world before Christ came to bear the same testimony. A learned Greek, called Xenophon, said, "It is clear that I have two souls; when the good one gets the upper hand it does right; when the evil it enters on wicked courses." A still wiser man, named Plato, used the image of a good and bad horse, yoked to a chariot, and driven by the same charioteer. There are two powers at work in human nature, dragging in different directions. And Crates, another great man of olden times, said that it was impossible to find a man who had not fallen; just as every pomegranate had a bad grain in it, so every character had some flaw, some seed of corruption. So we find that men of heathen lands to-day, who have never heard the name of Christ, echo the cry of the Apostle Paul, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" They feel their bondage to evil; they feel their need of a deliverance. Now Jesus is the Saviour of men. Only Christ has borne this great name. Mohammed is prophet; Buddha is teacher only; Jesus is Saviour. He can deliver us from the bondage of sin. One of my friends, who is a missionary in China, told me the other day that the creed of many a Christian convert may be summed up in a sentence: "I believe that Jesus Christ is able to deliver me from the opium habit." The gospel wins them by the promise of deliverance from that frightful vice. They begin with that. They put the saving power of Jesus to the proof. "I am given up to every sin you can imagine," said Liu Kisa Shan; "I am an opium smoker, a libertine, a gambler, a drunkard, an unfilial man, and everything that is bad. Can Christ Jesus save me?" He had strolled into the chapel at Hankow, and the preacher's words had stirred the hope of deliverance in his heart. "Can Christ Jesus save me?" "Yes; He can, and He will," said the preacher. And they knelt down together and cried to Him for salvation. And the new heart was given of which we were talking last week. And Liu went home to his friends, to show them how great things the Lord had done for him; and is to-day the centre of a gospel work where once he was notorious for evil living. Jesus saves men to-day. He can save you, for "He is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God through Him." (*Howard James.*)

Released from debt:—The great Henry Clay was once placed in a position where he could not refuse a favour, and yet where he would not have credited himself with doing anything to earn the release he received. He owed £2,000 at the Northern Bank of Kentucky, and his note for that amount had been renewed from time to time, in spite of all his efforts to contrive a way to meet it—until the debt became a source of almost hopeless anxiety to him. The thought of it intruded upon him everywhere, and embarrassed his work, and worried his rest. The day for payment would come again, and find him as helpless as ever. He chafed like a lion in a net. Whether or not he ever betrayed his uneasiness, there were at least a few who came to know its secret—and with results such as he was the last man to expect. He went into the bank one morning on the old errand. "I have called to see about my debt." The cashier replied, "It has been paid; you don't owe us anything." He was struck with amazement, and, under strong emotion, he turned and went out. Those men who paid the embarrassed statesman's debt did it because they loved him. Christ Jesus loved us so well that He died to release us from the sins of the past, and became Surety Himself for our debt to God's broken law which we never could pay. We never earned such a boon. It was only His love that gave it. (*Christian Age.*)

Ye shall not therefore oppress one another.—*The oppressor rebuked and the oppression removed*:—I. THE OPPRESSION WHICH NOW EXISTS, AND WHICH IT IS OUR DUTY TO REMOVE. There can be no doubt that there is a fierce spirit of competition abroad—a spirit which pervades every trade, which enters every profession, which stalks about our exchange, sits by the merchant and the banker at their desks, opens the shop early and closes it late, excites angry feeling and envy, makes the man of business anxious and excited abroad, sullen or fretful at home, which unfosters the restraints of religion and honour, interposes between neighbour and neighbour, friend and friend, relation and relation: it suggests enterprises which are rash, bargains which are hard, speculations of doubtful morality, and acts which once would have made the honest cheek to glow with the blush of shame. This spirit it is which leads to fearful embarrassments, unlawful expedients, a wretched parsimony, a false appearance, a costly display, a feverish existence, an untimely end. Oh! if there be a people to whom it is a duty to sound this warning, "Take heed and beware of covetousness," that nation is our own. It has been most truly said, that the "desire of accumulation is the source of all our greatness and all our base-

ness. It is at once our glory and our shame. It is the cause of our commerce, of our navy, of our military triumphs, of our enormous wealth, and our marvellous inventions; and it is the cause of our factions and animosities, of our squalid pauperism, and the worse than heathen degradation of our population." This spirit has burst forth with such a fearful wide-spreading influence that men begin to look aghast, and wonder what it will lead to. Poets have sung of such a time; the Word of God has warned us against it; statesmen are meditating upon it; the press is thundering against it; and very late—alas! too late!—the pulpit is giving utterance to the wise, loving counsels of One who said, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesses." Now, before I proceed to place before you the oppression which prevails, and the serious consequences which are resulting from it, let me ask, however this question may affect yourself, whether you would wish such a state of things to go on unchecked and unrebuked? Would you wish the fever of speculation, of competition, to increase? Would you wish the spirit of dissatisfaction amongst the working classes to strengthen? There can be no question that whilst many schemes of Christian benevolence and piety have been started and carried out, having reference to other lands, there has prevailed amongst ourselves a wretchedness and depth of suffering which ought long ago to have been investigated and relieved. This misery has been unheeded, not because other objects have enlisted sympathy and received attention—for that would be a foul libel upon that charity which "never faileth," and can alike stretch forth its arms to succour the African slave and bend down to whisper comfort and advice to the miserable at home—but there has grown up so silently and gradually a monster evil, that even the victims themselves have been slow to discern its character, and slower still to suggest a remedy. The human frame is limited in its power of enduring fatigue; and when we consider that there are thousands who are employed in constant labour for more than twelve hours, often, too, in an unwholesome atmosphere and in a constrained position, you will be prepared for the statement, made upon medical testimony, that impaired, exhausted frames, and often an untimely death, are the fruits of this system. Oh! think, I pray, of these bitter wrongs; think of the agony of spirit, the long-protracted hopeless effort, the attenuated frame, the hollow cheek, the chilled eye, the tottering limbs, the constant heart weight, the cheerless room, the sleepless night, the voiceless, gnawing feeling of despair; yes, think of this occurring in London, with its churches, and Houses of Parliament, and Exeter Hall meetings, and greetings to Crimean heroes, and running to help some sturdy vagabond beggar, and then remember, with shame and confusion of face, that it has been written, "Ye shall not therefore oppress one another; but thou shalt fear thy God: for I am the Lord your God." II. It would not be of any use if we were to content ourselves with sighing over all these miseries, instead of inquiring WHAT STEPS MAY BE TAKEN TO ALLEVIATE AND REDRESS THEM. I have, therefore, drawn your attention to that painful subject in the hope of inducing you to sympathise with the efforts which are now made, especially by the Early Closing Association, to ameliorate the condition of the working classes. It is very satisfactory, then, and encouraging to feel, that the interests of the employer and the employed are in this respect identical; for it is evident that it cannot be for the advantage of the employer that the health, and energy, and spirit, and moral principle of those he employs should be undermined. The manufacturer would soon suffer if the quality of his raw material became deteriorated; and if the stamina of England's working men became weakened, her producing power would necessarily become less. Now it is encouraging to find that the employers of labour are themselves becoming more alive to the necessity of something being done. I could easily multiply instances of employers who are alive to the duty as well as advantage of taking steps to improve the condition of the employed. And what are these steps? The closing earlier every day, the payment of wages on Thursday or Friday, or, at all events, at an early hour on Saturday, and the Saturday half-holiday. Are these inconsistent with the interests of employers? Far from it. We have ample testimony to prove that the labourers so relieved will apply themselves with increased alacrity to their work, animated with gratitude to their employers, and stimulated by a new-found hope. Then will the English home resume its cheerfulness; then will the husband and father taste the delights which purify and soften, and then, too, will the Sabbath dawn on many who will spring forth to perform its hallowed duties, to feel its soothing influence, and to worship in the courts of Him who hath said—"Ye shall not oppress one another; but thou shalt fear thy God: for I am the Lord your

God." (*C. F. S. Money, M.A.*) *Laws of trade-wages*:—It is said that John Wanamaker, when a girl told him that she could not possibly live on the three and a half dollars a week that he offered her, replied: "I know it, but the fact is that I am overrun with applications from girls, daughters of mechanics, tradesmen, &c., who have their homes already, and use their wages merely for dress, and they set the scale." The story of the employer who coolly told a girl who came with the same complaint: "Most of our girls have gentlemen friends who provide for them; you had better do the same," has been not only widely told, but widely believed. A gentleman went to a wealthy importer on Broadway to ask for a situation for a friend, and received the reply: "He had better not come here. The fact is, all our men are underpaid, but we can get all we want at present wages. Why should we pay any more?" It is notorious that an immense amount of the "piecework" done by women for the great stores and manufactories is done by those who merely wish to provide themselves with some additional comforts. So instances innumerable might be given of the fact that the wage-earners suffer most from the competition of those who are, at least in a measure, independent. That this is wrong and unjust will be acknowledged at once by all right-minded people. The remedy, however, is not so easily recognised. As a rule, it has been supposed to lie with the employed themselves. It is said that these others have no right to work at such low terms. Undoubtedly, if all were unselfish, there would result much alleviation of the difficulty. There is, however, another phase of the case to which we would call attention, and that is the responsibility of the employer. How far is it right for a man to accept of service for which he does not pay a fair price—i.e., a price such that the one who receives it can live upon it fairly and comfortably? There are, of course, limitations. No iron rule can be laid down. Inexperience cannot claim the same as experience, extravagance should not lay down the law for economy. Yet, after all, every employer knows perfectly well whether or not he is paying what are called "living wages." It is much the fashion to decry the Mosaic laws as belonging to a period and state of society entirely foreign to modern needs. No one, however, who carefully studies those laws can fail to recognise the fact that they touch very closely upon the demands that we hear on every side for a more equal distribution of property, a more just relation between employer and employed. The German Empire has already endorsed the same principle in stating clearly the obligation of the community to provide for its individual members. The Occident is not the Orient. Anglo-Saxons are not Semites; but the fundamental law that one man shall not oppress another, by taking advantage of his necessities is just as true now and here as it was in the desert of Arabia many centuries ago. (*Hom. Review.*) **What shall we eat the seventh year?**—I. Let us first LISTEN TO THE QUESTION. "What shall we eat the seventh year?" Now this was a question of mere nature. Grace had nothing to do with it. It is man trusting in his own native strength, man who judges all things by his own reason, man who goes no further in his belief than what he can see and what he can understand. Human nature can understand ploughing and reaping. Nature can comprehend scattering the seed. Nature can believe in a self-dependent life, but nature cannot understand renouncing all human activity and living absolutely on Jehovah's blessing, and, therefore, in a spirit of querulous unbelief, it asks, "But what shall we eat?" Asking this question is virtually to arraign God at the bar of Reason, and say, "It is all very well to tell us that we are not to plough, and not to gather, and not to reap; but what shall we eat? We shall starve if we are only to feed on what Thou givest us. If we do this thing we shall have empty barns, and empty barns will mean empty mouths, and empty mouths will mean national ruin and death." Thus blinded nature always argues, and will not trust for more than it can see. A plough that can be beheld is valued far before a God that can only be believed. Now is not this a question continually being asked in the present day? Is it not being put by some here this morning? There is one yonder asking it in this wise: If I do all that God tells me, how shall I get on in life or make my way? If I conduct my business according to high Christian principles, if I give absolute and complete obedience to all the commands of Scripture, if I keep my fingers clean of those things that defile the world's hands, and if I maintain my integrity, and refuse to stoop to all the petty little meannesses that I find common in the business of the world, well, then, what shall I eat? May I not as well put up the shutters at once? This very matter was brought before me only yesterday by a professing Christian. Said he, "Sir, it is all very well for you to talk as you do, and right you should, but if we don't do these little things, our children will have to suffer

for it. We are living in the world, and we have to do in a measure as the world does, for if we don't, what shall we eat?" Thus unbelief steps in, and says, "Perfect obedience to God means starvation." Whilst on the other hand faith replies, "Perfect obedience means a feast on blessing." Faith cares not from whence the supply may come; faith troubles not about probable results; it obeys God's commands, asks no questions, and raises no objections. Let us not, however, be too hard on these persons, for this question is often asked more in a spirit of anxiety than a disposition to cavil. A timid believer, with no thought of limiting the Holy One of Israel, may put the question in some such form as this: "Well, sir, it is all very true what you say, and God forbid I should doubt His providence, but supposing I should be sick during this year—supposing I should have a long, weary illness, that keeps me from work for weeks! What should I do? Facts are stubborn things, and if I cannot earn a penny, how am I to purchase anything for the family? If there is to be a long cessation from employment, what shall we eat?" Or, it may be, there are some already in this position, who are saying, "It is easy, sir, for you to stand up on that platform and talk, but you would alter your language if you were in my place. Look! When I scan the horizon, I cannot see one harvest-field that I am likely to reap this year. If I go to all my barns I find them empty; if I go to my trees I find them stripped. Humanly speaking, I can see no hope of anything but hardship and privation, and the question of my heart this morning is, 'What shall we eat this year?' and though I have asked it a hundred times, I seem no nearer the solution of the problem." Well, dear friend, you have my heart's truest sympathy, and I would that I could help you, and all like you, but yet I must say, "Trust in God and do the right." "I will command My blessing," is God's answer to your question of anxiety. Sometimes, however, the question is asked more from curiosity than even anxiety. It is in such spirit that we ask the question this morning, "What shall we eat?" It is not a question whether God will give us food or not; we know He will; but we should like to know what manner of food it is He will put into our mouths this seventh year. Will it be the same as last year or better? Will there be a new flavour about it, or a repetition of the old savour? Shall it be fruit from a new tree, or new fruit from an old tree? What shall be our kind of experience during this year? Shall we, during its months, eat of the fruit of Canaan, or shall we be satisfied with the manna of the wilderness? II. Well, we will try now to GIVE YOU THE ANSWER as you have it in the text. We shall live on the blessing of our God. Israel had to learn one truth, and that one truth was this—that God's blessing was worth more than all their own efforts; that if God spake a word of commanding blessing, it was worth more to them than all their ploughs and agricultural labour. Beloved, is not this true for you? Have not you in three ways to learn the lesson that the Lord will provide? It will be true this year in your life as far as temporal matters are concerned. It is not the expenditure of brain power, or the employment of arm muscle that will win you your bread; it is the blessing of God resting on you. There is nought apart from that; and we pray that you may acknowledge the precious truth, and at the end of this year say, concerning your gettings, "It is because Jehovah has commanded His blessing." But there is a higher life you and I have to live, and that is soul life. How will that be maintained this year? I answer—By the blessing of God. No man has power to keep the fire within his own soul aglow; no man has might sufficient to keep his own faith from staggering; no one has self-contained ability to keep his own heart from wandering. And how true will it be in reference to us as a Church! The preacher this year must look to God for his texts. "The Lord will provide" must be recognised even in that. It is not the service, it is the blessing on the service. It is not the word, it is the blessing on the word. It is the dew that is on the manna that makes it so refreshing; it is Jehovah's benediction that alone satisfies; and though we may drive our own plough, and though we may try and scatter the seed broadcast on every hand, yet if you obtain one spiritual feast this year, the speaker steps back and says it is not of him. If God makes him a means of blessing unto one soul, it is neither he nor his sermon, it is the Lord's commanded blessing that has refreshed the heart. Had we time, we might show you how this applies to everything in connection with the Church. Our schools will prosper just as Heaven's blessing is their portion. There is one other thought which arises naturally out of the subject; it is this, that the answer to the question, "What shall we eat the seventh year" is "Exactly the same as you had on the sixth year," because you will observe, if you look at the context, that God gave them a double blessing on the sixth year, so that the trees yielded twice their

wont—treble rather—and the fields a threefold harvest. So that on the seventh and eighth years they had no new kind of fruit to that they had on the sixth. It was the same fruit, and of the same flavour. (*A. G. Brown.*) *Man need not despair of Providence*:—See, then, and sink it into your heart soundly, what God is able to do for you touching all worldly necessities, if you will obey Him and trust in Him. Such a promise in Exodus He made also, to keep all things in safety for them at home, while they were at Jerusalem serving Him according to this law. And what loss had the shepherds when they left their flocks in the fields and went to the child Jesus, according as the angel had told them? Let this place again strengthen your faith against all objections of flesh and blood, made from natural reasons and causes as they seem to men. For if the Lord be able, even then when the earth is weakest, having been worn out with continual tillage, five years together, to make the sixth year bring forth a triple blessing, enough for that year, for the seventh year, and for the eighth year, till harvest were ready; what unseasonable weather, what barrenness of land, what this, what that, shall make a man despair of God's providence for things needful? Leave God to Himself, and to His almighty power: do you your duty, fear Him, love Him, serve Him, obey Him with a true heart, call upon your children and servants to do the like, and you shall see the lovingkindness of the Lord to your comfort. These things shall be cast upon you, and He that knoweth your charge, and gave you that charge, will never fail you nor them of what is fit. You see here what He can do, and let it profit you. I will tell you the feeling of my heart further in this point, and thus I reason: Can God be thus strong when the land is weak, and will He be thus strong to the comfort of His servants? Why, then, cannot He be, or why will He not be, strong in my weakness, in your weakness, and in every man and woman's weakness that believe in Him? Away, Fear, away, I may not hearken unto thee! when I am weakest He will be strongest. For His power is best seen in weakness, and I will put my whole trust and confidence in Him, drawing an argument with David from my weakness to move Him, and not to discomfort me. Heal me, O Lord, for I am weak. My weakness shall drive me unto Thee, not from Thee, and I will tarry Thy good leisure. Lord strengthen me, Lord comfort me, and under the covering of Thy wings let me be safe from all temptations displeasing Thee and hurting me! (*Bp. Babington.*) *Practical reliance upon God*:—A faithful and zealous Methodist minister in North Carolina writes to a friend in Calcutta: "There are two cotton factories here, and my charge consists chiefly of the proprietors, operatives, and others connected with the factories. The proprietors are Christians and Methodists, and stand ready to do what they can for the cause of Christ. The leading man takes a lively interest in our Church work, and teaches a large class of little boys in our Sabbath School, although weighed down by the cares of an immense business all the week. When the new factory was built, the building, with all its machinery, was solemnly dedicated, by a public religious service, to be used for the glory of God. Two years ago a great revival was in progress here. Mr. — stopped the factory that all hands might attend the meetings. He received an urgent order from New York for goods. He replied that the goods could not be furnished. They telegraphed from New York that they must have the goods. Then the wires flashed back the message: 'The Lord is at work; the factories will not run this week.' Would that we had more such men! Christ requires that money as well as intellect and heart, be consecrated to Him. 'The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, saith the Lord of hosts.'" Surely the Lord would say to that millowner, as He said to the Canaanitish woman, Great is thy faith! (*Indian Witness.*) The land is Mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with Me.—*The Hebrew system of land tenure*:—I. The first and fundamental principle of the land system prescribed to the chosen people who were to inhabit this typical land was, THAT THE LAND BELONGED TO JEHOVAH, AND WAS TO BE HELD BY THE PEOPLE IMMEDIATELY OF AND UNDER HIM, AS THEIR SOVEREIGN AND PARAMOUNT SUPERIOR AND LORD. II. Flowing naturally—indeed, one might say logically—from the principle of the Divine ownership of the soil, and its possession by the Israelites as the Lord's chosen people, is the next feature of the Israelitish land system—viz., THE EQUAL PARTITION OF THE LAND AMONG THE WHOLE FAMILIES CONSTITUTING THE NATION (see Numb. xxvi.). It is to be noticed that, in the actual division of the land, each tribe was to receive its allotment in proportion to its numerical extent, distinct from the others; and that the tribal allotment was thereafter to be apportioned among the whole families composing the tribe, so that each should have its own definite share. Besides, it was subsequently provided that an allotment in the territory of one tribe should

never become the possession of any member of a different tribe, so that heiresses or heiress-portioners, could marry only "in the family of the tribe of their father." These subsidiary enactments, doubtless, had reference specially to the peculiar character and aims of the Israelitish constitution. They tended to preserve and perpetuate family and tribal traditions and sentiments; they facilitated the keeping of accurate genealogical records; they provided a basis for the practical operation of the law of jubilee; they promoted the self-government of the people by the graduated judicatories of the family and the tribe; and they, at the same time, welded the people into one compact commonwealth, by the bonds of an equal interest in the soil. It is, of course, impossible here even to glance at the much-discussed question of the relative merits of an aristocratic or a peasant proprietary, of large or small landowners, of extensive or limited farms. But it is interesting to notice that, in the Israelitish land legislation, we have precisely and practically that system of peasant proprietary which we find existing and flourishing in many countries, and to which not a few of those who have given the most independent and thoughtful and earnest attention to the matter, look for the solution of the difficulties which are gathering around the subject in our own land. III. The next feature of the Israelitish land system is, THAT THE RETURN TO BE MADE BY THE PEOPLE FOR THEIR LANDS WAS PRECISELY THE SAME AS THAT WHICH JOSEPH FIXED TO BE PAID BY THE EGYPTIAN CROWN TENANTRY—*VIZ.*, ONE-FIFTH OF THE GROSS ANNUAL PRODUCE. In the case of the Israelites, however, this fifth was divided into two-tenths, and its payment was prescribed in a form breathing the spirit rather of grateful religious acknowledgment than of strict legal exaction. IV. The next characteristic of the Israelitish land system is, THAT THE LAND WAS ALLOTTED TO THE PEOPLE, AND HELD BY THEM AS THE VASSALS OF THE LORD, WAS INALIENABLE. "The land shall not be sold for ever, for the land is Mine, saith the Lord." It was clearly requisite, for the maintenance of the essential characteristics of the Israelitish constitution, and for the realisation of the national destiny, that the land should be inalienable. A system which permitted of the aggregation, more or less rapidly, of the land of the country into the hands of the few; and of the consequent detachment, more or less extensively, of the population from the soil, would have been fatal to the preservation of the national existence and to the realisation of the national destiny. The law distinctly and absolutely forbade the sale or alienation of the land, and fortified the prohibition by the enactments against usury or interest. The successive landholders had, therefore, in reality, only a life interest in it; and it was equitable and conceivably beneficial that they should possess the power of disposing of this limited interest. Innocent misfortune might compel, or other causes might induce, them to part with it. And this the law of jubilee enabled them to do. By that law the landholder was enabled to dispose of the usufruct—the right to the fruits—of the land for a period not exceeding, at its ultimate possible limit, the interval between the age of twenty, when a male Israelite attained full majority, and seventy, the estimated end of a normal human life. All that the landholder was empowered to dispose of was his own life interest. But neither the seller nor the purchaser knew what would be the certain duration of that interest; and in these days actuarial tables, exhibiting the average expectation of human life, did not exist. The law of jubilee therefore stepped in and converted each life interest into an interest terminating at the next jubilee; and the purchaser paid for it a price corresponding to the number of years intervening between the sale and the jubilee, under deduction of the sabbatic or fallow years. But the disposal even of this limited interest in the soil was not an absolute or irredeemable one. The power to sell it at all was a concession to human frailty or necessity. It was not to be presumed that a true-hearted Israelite would alienate his interest in the soil of the covenanted land except under the severe pressure of adverse circumstances. Indeed, so strong do we find this attachment to the soil that even in the troublous times of Ahab, Naboth repels the overtures of the king for his land with the exclamation, "The Lord forbid it me that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee" (1 Kings xxi. 3). And so, to afford an opportunity for the redemption of the land, if the circumstances of the seller should improve, or a kinsman be willing to take his place, the law of jubilee provided that the seller or his kinsman should at any time be entitled to redeem the life interest by paying to the purchaser the value of the usufruct for the period still to elapse between the redemption and the jubilee, calculated on the basis of the original price. It is only to be noticed further that the prohibition to alienate did not extend to dwelling-houses in walled cities. As these were not in any way con-

nected with the agricultural occupancy of the land they might be sold in perpetuity ; but to prevent coercion, or thoughtless disposal, or hardship from other causes, the law provided a species of *annus deliberandi*, so that the house could be redeemed at the stipulated price at any time before the expiry of a year from the day of sale, after which it became irredeemable. The law of jubilee had, of course, a national as well as an individual purpose, a religious as well as a secular significance. It was part of that great system of types which ran through the whole of Mosaism. It made provision for the periodical removal or modification of the inequalities which sprang up among the people in the course of years. It prevented families being permanently impoverished through the incapacity, the profligacy, or the misfortune of an individual member. It periodically restored all diverted lands to their true owners, freed of all encumbrances and trammels. It was a national rejuvenescence, a periodical restoration and renewal of the original constitution of the commonwealth, and an infusion of fresh life and spirit into the whole community ! V. The only other portion of the Israelitish land system that remains to be noticed is THE LAW OF SUCCESSION. The Israelitish law of inheritance is expressed in Numb. xxvii. 8-11. The Mosaic law makes no provision regarding the testamentary disposal of property ; and the idea of such a power is excluded both by its fundamental principle, to which we have adverted, and by the system of heritable succession which it expressly prescribes. The principle that the land was the Lord's and that the successive generations of Israelites were merely "strangers" temporarily "sojourning" upon it, necessarily excluded the power of posthumous settlement no less than that of alienation during life. (*R. Reid.*) *Sojourners with God* :—The institution of the jubilee year had more than one purpose. As a social arrangement it tended to prevent extremes of wealth and poverty. As a ceremonial institution it was the completion of the law of the sabbath. It was appointed to enforce, and to make the whole fabric of the national wealth rest upon, this thought contained in the text. The land was not theirs to sell—they had only a beneficial occupation. They were only like a band of wanderers settling for a while, by permission of the Owner, on His estate. I. HERE IS THE LESSON OF GOD'S PROPRIETORSHIP AND OUR STEWARDSHIP. "The land is Mine." 1. This thought should nurture thankfulness. The darkest night is filled with light, and the loneliest place blazes with angel faces, and the stoneiest pillow is soft to him who sees everywhere the ladder that knits earth with heaven, and to whom all his blessings are as the messengers that descend it on errands of mercy and lead up the heart to the God from whom they come. 2. This thought should bring submission. We should not murmur, however we may regret, if the Landowner takes back a bit of the land which He has let us occupy. He does not take it away for His advantage, but "for our profit"—that we may be driven to claim a better inheritance in Himself than we can find even in the best of His gifts. 3. This thought should produce a sense of responsibility in the use of all we have. II. HERE IS THE LESSON OF THE TRANSCIENCY OF OUR STAY ON EARTH. "Ye are strangers and sojourners." 1. The contrast between the external world and our stay in it. 2. The constant change and progression of life. 3. The true and only permanent home. Use the transient as preparation for the eternal. III. HERE IS THE LESSON OF TRUST. "With Me." We have companionship even when most solitary. Whoever goes, God abides. (*Homilist.*) *Land laws among other nations* :—Some knowledge of our ordinance reached heathen authors ; thus Diodor of Sicily writes : "Moses divided the land by lot, giving equal portions to the private citizens, but larger ones to the priests ; and he forbade the former to sell their lands, lest some greedily buy up many allotments, eject the less prosperous, and thus cause a decrease of the population." Among other ancient nations we find some arrangements slightly analogous to the Biblical laws. Lycurgus, after having distributed the land essentially in equal parts, made it infamous for any one either to buy another's possession or to sell his own ; yet by permitting the citizens to give their property away or to bequeath it, he paved the way for that which eventually happened that "some had far too much, others too little, by which means the land came into few hands." Solon enacted a law restraining persons from acquiring land beyond a given limit. Plato believed that no one ought to possess more than four times as much as the lowest income or as "a single lot." The Locrians were forbidden to sell their ancient patrimony or their original lots of land unless notoriously compelled by distress ; and in some other countries it was unlawful to sell such lands on any account. The Dalmatae made a partition of their land every eighth year. With a view of equalising the property of the citizens Phaleas

of Chalcedon ordained that the rich should give marriage portions, but never receive any, while the poor should always receive but never give them. Yet even these and similar measures, imperfect and desultory compared with the complete and well-balanced law of the Pentateuch, were found impracticable, and for the most part remained a dead letter. Aristotle thus comments on equality of property: "It is possible that an equality of goods is established, and yet that this may be either too great, when it leads to a luxurious living, or too little when it obliges the people to live hard. Hence it is evident that the legislator must aim at a proper medium or a moderate sufficiency for all. And yet it is even of more consequence that the citizens should entertain a similarity of feelings than an equality of property; but this can only be if they are properly educated under the direction of the laws." Would the great philosopher, had he known the legislation of the Pentateuch, have found in it the realisation of his ideal? He certainly describes with precision its main features. (*M. M. Kalisch, Ph.D.*)

Ver. 35. And if thy brother be waxen poor.—*Jewish benevolence*:—Mr. William Gilbert, describing in *Good Words* the cases of mendicancy which he saw appear before the Jewish Board of Guardians, tells of a Prussian Jew, quite blind, who was led into the room by a child of one of the lodgers of the house he lived in. He informed the Board that he had been some weeks in England, and was utterly destitute. On being asked how he had contrived to live, he replied that the poor Jews in Petticoat Lane had made a subscription for him, and he had received about eight shillings a week from the pence they had subscribed.

Vers. 39-55. If thy brother . . . be sold unto thee.—*Slavery*:—I. TEXTS RELATING TO SLAVES. 1. Called bondmen (Gen. xliii. 18; xlv. 9). 2. By birth (Gen. xiv. 14; Psa. cxvi. 16; Jer. ii. 14). 3. By purchase (Gen. xvii. 27; xxxvii. 36). 4. Sometimes captives taken in war (Deut. xx. 14; 2 Kings v. 2). 5. Strangers, under certain restrictions (ver. 45). 6. Foreigners, might be purchased (ver. 44). 7. Debtors, liable to be sold (2 Kings iv. 1; Neh. v. 4, 5; Matt. xviii. 25). 8. Thieves were sold (Exod. xxii. 3). 9. Israelites to be kindly treated (vers. 39, 40, 46), and to be liberated after six years (Exod. xxi. 2; Deut. xv. 12); or if they refused to be free, then (Exod. xxi. 5, 6; Deut. xv. 16, 17), when sold to foreigners might be redeemed (vers. 47-55), or be free at the jubilee (vers. 10, 40, 41, 54), but could not demand wife and child procured during bondage (Exod. xxi. 3, 4); were to be furnished liberally on regaining liberty (Deut. xv. 13, 14). 10. Foreign slaves to rest on Sabbath (Exod. xx. 10), to share in national rejoicing (Deut. xii. 18; xvi. 11, 14). 11. If ill-treated by masters, to be set free (Exod. xxi. 26, 27). 12. Laws respecting killing slaves (Exod. xxi. 20, 21). 13. If they ran away, not to be delivered up (Deut. xxiii. 15). 14. Sometimes rose to rank (Eccles. x. 7), and might intermarry with master's family (1 Chron. ii. 34, 35). 15. Kidnapping condemned (Exod. xxi. 16; Deut. xxiv. 7; 1 Tim. i. 10). II. NOTE ON THE ABOVE TEXTS. Consider—1. The nature of slavery as practised by the heathen world (the treatment of Israelites by Egyptians). 2. The restraint laid upon these Israelites in their conduct to foreign bondsmen. But for these laws how might these people—who had been slaves of foreigners themselves—have treated foreigners when in their turn they became masters? 3. The relation of Israelitish slaves to Israelitish masters, with their privileges (social and religious), and certain freedom. 4. The causes for which alone they might become slaves. 5. Especially consider that while these laws ameliorated the condition of slavery as it then existed—eliminating the elements of cruelty, &c., leaving, in fact, nothing of bondage but the name—they paved the way, by the training of justice and mercy, for the total extinction of slavery. 6. Christianity in spirit, precept, and practice against slavery. (1) Asserts that there is no bond or free, but that all are one in Christ. (2) Teaches the fraternity of the race. "God hath made of one blood," &c. "All we are brethren." (3) Strikingly illustrates this by the case of a runaway slave—Onesimus—whom Paul sent back to his master, whom in some way he had wronged, not as a slave, but as a brother beloved (Philemon). Learn: 1. No warrant for modern slavery in the Word of God (Isa. lviii. 6). 2. Spiritual slavery the worst form (2 Tim. ii. 26). 3. This may be the state of men who are politically free (John viii. 34; 2 Pet. ii. 19). 4. Jesus the great Emancipator (John viii. 32-36; Rom. vi. 18-22; Gal. v. 1; 1 Pet. ii. 16). (*J. C. Gray.*)

CHAPTER XXVI.

VER. 2. *Ye shall keep My Sabbaths, and reverence My sanctuary.—Of the stated times of God's worship, particularly the Lord's Day :—*I. WHAT WERE THE REASONS UPON WHICH GOD MIGHT BE SUPPOSED, UNDER THE LAW, TO HAVE INSTITUTED MORE SOLEMN AND SET TIMES OF WORSHIP. 1. As to the reasonableness of the institution in general, it was highly agreeable to the natural light of mankind upon these following accounts. (1) All external worship is designed to give us impressions of greater reverence for the Divine Majesty. Now, such is the temper of human nature, that men have much less regard for those things that are common than for those which have some peculiar mark of distinction set upon them. (2) It being one of the first principles of natural religion that God is to be publicly worshipped, order requires that there should be some determinate and public times set apart for His worship and piety, that such times should be vacations from the common affairs of human life. (3) It being a further end of religious worship to advance the spiritual life and bring us nearer unto God, it is not only agreeable to piety, but to all the maxims of religious prudence, that the times appropriated to the more solemn worship of God should be distinguished by a cessation from the common business of life, that by this means, our minds being wholly taken off from earthly things, they may be more open to the heavenly impressions of grace and truth. 2. These are some of the natural reasons upon which we may account for God's commanding His people to keep His Sabbath, that is, all the stated and solemn times of His public worship; but what I have here principally an eye to is the institution of the Sabbath, which the Jews were so forcibly enjoined to keep holy in the Fourth Commandment. Now, the two principal reasons of this institution seem to have been—(1) That hereby they acknowledged God to be the Lord, the Creator and Governor of the world; and—(2) That they acknowledged Him to be in a more eminent and peculiar manner their God by delivering them out of the hand of Egypt. II. HOW FAR THOSE REASONS, IN EITHER RESPECT, HOLD GOOD UNDER THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION. 1. The general reasons I laid down for setting apart some solemn time for the worship of God certainly extend to us Christians, and to all the nations under heaven, as well as to the Jews. Indeed, when we consider that to everything under the sun there is a time, and that the natural order of things requires there should be so, it seems highly reasonable that some stated seasons should be appropriated to His service, to whom we owe all the moments of our time and the capacity of all other enjoyments. Jesus Christ did not come to destroy any one duty arising from the law of nature or the common principles of natural religion, but to give all such duties their utmost force. 2. The great difficulty to be considered is how far those reasons, upon which the Jewish Sabbath in particular was instituted, may be supposed to affect us Christians. (1) It appears matter of moral obligation that there should be some day set apart more peculiarly devoted to the honour and worship of Almighty God. (2) It appears no less reasonable that the returns of such a day should be so frequent as to keep up a constant sense of religion, and their duty to God, in the minds of men, without interfering with the necessary affairs of human life. (3) It must be granted somewhat difficult to determine this matter exactly from any principle of natural reason, it not clearly discovering what proportion of our time we are to set apart for the more solemn worship of God, or why one day in seven, rather than six or eight, should be observed to this end. III. HOW AND IN WHAT MANNER THE LORD'S DAY OUGHT TO BE OBSERVED. 1. We are to consider the Lord's Day is a time set apart for the more public worship and service of God, wherein we are to do Him honour and praise Him according to His excellent greatness. 2. We ought also on the Lord's Day to employ ourselves constantly in the private exercises of religion. 3. As the Lord's Day is a day of thanksgiving for the public or private mercies we have received from God, it is a proper exercise of it to perform acts of mercy and charity to others, and both with respect to their souls and bodies. 4. As the Lord's Day is a day devoted to the service of God and religion, let us take care to sanctify it by religious conversation. 5. That we may better attend these duties, we must not only intermit our ordinary labours and employments, but take off our thoughts, as much as possible, from the business of them. (R. Fiddes, D.D.) *Of the stated places of God's worship, and in what manner our reverence towards them ought to be expressed :—*I. THE REASONS OF APPROPRIATING PLACES TO THE PUBLIC WORSHIP OF GOD ARE THE SAME IN GENERAL

UNDER THE CHRISTIAN AS UNDER THE MOSAIC DISPENSATION. 1. One end of God's appointing the tabernacle, and afterwards the temple, was to possess the minds of the Jews with more devout affections in their religious addresses to Him. The place we are in naturally puts us in mind of the proper business and design of it. 2. It is a principle highly agreeable to the natural notions of mankind that God is in a special manner present in such places, not only as they are consecrated to Him, and He has thereby a special propriety in them, but also by reason of the united prayers which are therein put up to Him, and which are reasonably presumed to be of more efficacy than those of single persons to bring down the real and sensible effects of His presence with the blessings prayed for. 3. The common notions we have of order and decency require that the place designed for God's more immediate service should be appropriated to Him, and to Him only. Of order, that men may know where to repair on all occasions to worship God; and of decency, because it is contrary to all the rules of it, and, indeed, to the ordinary acceptance of holiness throughout the Scriptures, that what is common or unclean should be promiscuously used with things set apart for holy and religious uses. II. PLACES SO APPROPRIATED HAVE A RELATIVE HOLINESS IN THEM, AND OUGHT THEREFORE TO BE REVERENCED. This is the notion of holiness with respect to things, and persons, and times, as well as places designed for the service of God, in the Old Testament, that they were separated from common uses to His own. And if for this very reason they were accounted sacred then, what imaginable pretence can there be that the same reason should not render them, and all of them, sacred now? If it be pretended that the temple was accounted holy by reason of the legal sacrifices which were offered to God in it, we ask why the Christian sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving in our churches should not be a sufficient ground for reputed them holy also? If it be said that there were sensible effects of God's presence in the temple upon which it had a peculiar relation of holiness to Him, we answer that God, as to the spiritual and gracious effects of His presence, and wherein He manifests it in the most beneficial and excellent manner, is present in our Christian temples. If it be said, further, that the temple was built by the special command of God, and upon that account a certain holiness was ascribed to it, whereas we have no such command for building any places purely for God's worship now, it is answered again that the design of David's building a temple, and Solomon's going on with it, do not appear to have proceeded from any positive and direct command of God. God, it is true, gave particular directions about building the temple, but it does not therefore follow that the design of building it was not antecedently laid by these princes upon natural motives of piety and religion, the same motives upon which the patriarchs erected sanctuaries or separate places of worship to God before any positive institution to this end. Shall I now show that our Christian churches, which I have proved to be sanctuaries in a proper sense, ought therefore to be revered? This is a consequence which flows so naturally, or rather, indeed, necessarily, from what has been said, that I need not say much to illustrate it. I shall only observe that we are agreed in other cases to set a value on things or persons, not in consideration of their absolute and real worth, but of their relative use or character. An insect is considered in itself as a living creature more valuable than the brightest or richest jewel in the world; but we should think him very weak who would for that reason prefer a butterfly to a diamond, which, by common consent, serves him to so many more useful ends. For the same reason, with respect to the different characters of men, or any special relation they bear to God, to the prince, or to ourselves, we give them different and suitable testimonies of our esteem. Nay, when we truly honour or love any person, we naturally express a value for everything that nearly belongs to him or wherein he has a particular interest. Certainly, then, nothing can be more reasonable than that upon account of the special propriety God has in places set apart for His service, and for so many holy uses, we should express our reverence toward such places by all becoming testimonies of it. III. EVEN NATURAL REASON DISCOVERS FURTHER TO US HOW AND IN WHAT PARTICULARS OUR REVERENCE TOWARDS SUCH PLACES OUGHT TO BE EXPRESSED. 1. We are to reverence God's sanctuary by constantly repairing to it on all proper occasions. 2. We are to reverence God's sanctuary by a serious, devout, and regular behaviour in it. (1) By a serious and devout behaviour, I mean such decent postures of the body as most properly express the inward sentiments and attention of the mind. (2) By a regular behaviour in the worship of God, I understand a due conformity to the rules and order of the public service, and particularly that we should kneel or stand up at the

usual offices. 3. If we reverence God's sanctuary as we ought, we shall be willing to contribute what may be thought necessary towards the proper ornaments of it or the greater solemnity of the public worship in it. I shall now proceed to a conclusion, with a proper application or two from what has been said. 1. To those who offend against the first rule I laid down, concerning the reverence due to God's sanctuary, by coming late to it, or perhaps after a considerable part of the service is performed. If you are conscious to yourselves of any such scandalous, especially if it have been a customary, irreverence, be careful not to give any further offence to God or man, for it is really so to both in the same kind—to God, because it is so insolent a method of presenting ourselves in His courts, in order to beg any blessing or the pardon of our sins before we have made a humble confession of them; to man, because the Church, which we are presumed by attending her service to be members of, has piously directed such a confession at the beginning of her service. Not to mention the other disorders occasioned by this irreverence, and how contrary it is to the rule prescribed us by holy David, of worshipping God in the beauty of holiness (Psa. xxix. 2, xvi. 9). And for the same reason—2. If your consciences reproach you with any former unbecoming or irregular behaviour in the sanctuary of God, resolve hereafter to correct so great an indecency, or rather, indeed, so flaming an impiety. 3. What I shall say to those who have in any signal manner expressed their zeal for God's house, by contributing to the beauty or solemnity of it, shall be by way of encouragement. And certainly men cannot propose to themselves to show their reverence for God by a more truly pious act—an act whereby they more immediately glorify Him, in letting their good works shine before men. This consideration cannot but, at the same time, fill the minds of those who are concerned in it with a sensible pleasure and satisfaction, and make their hearts even spring for joy. This was the effect which the preparations of David and the Israelites for building the temple had upon them (1 Chron. xxix. 8). 4. What I would observe, in the last place, is that persons who are subservient in this respect towards promoting the honour of God may piously hope that He will by some wise methods pour down His special blessings upon them as He did upon Obed-Edom and his household, because of the ark of the covenant of God (2 Sam. vi. 11). (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 3-13. If ye walk in My statutes, and keep My commandments, and do them.—*The advantages of religion in a nation's life*:—I. WHEREIN A NATION'S RELIGIOUS LIFE CONSISTS. The recognised presence of God in the midst of the people (vers. 11, 12) may be realised—1. In sanctuaries consecrated to Divine worship throughout the land, and in assembled congregations gathering to adore Him (ver. 2). 2. In sacred literature diffusing religious knowledge among the people. 3. In benevolent and elevating institutions diffusing Christianity in its practical forms. 4. In educational agencies for the training of children early in moral and religious truth. 5. In homes and family life sweetened by the influence of piety. 6. In a legislature ruled by the fear of God and observant of Scripture precepts. 7. In wealth, gathered righteously, being expended for evangelical and Christian ends. 8. In the happy relationship of all social classes, based upon goodwill and respect. 9. In the stores of harvest and gains of commerce being acknowledged as God's providential gifts and generous benefactions (vers. 4, 5). All such public recognitions of the authority and the claims of religion, emphasise and declare that within this nation's life God dwells—known, revered, and served. II. ADVANTAGES WHICH RESULT TO A NATION FROM RELIGION. 1. Religion impels to industry, intelligence, self-respect, and social improvement; and these will affect every branch of labour and enterprise, resulting in material prosperity (vers. 4, 5). 2. Religion leads to avoidance of agitation and conflict, checks greed, ambition, and vainglory, and thus promotes a wise content among the people, and peaceful relationships with surrounding nations (ver. 6). 3. Religion fosters sobriety, energy, and courage, and these qualities will assert themselves on the fields of war when sad occasion arises, and will ensure the overthrow of tyranny and the defeat of invasion (ver. 8). 4. Religion nurtures the wise oversight of homes and families, the preservation of domestic purity, the development of healthful and intelligent children, and these will work out in a strong and increasing population (ver. 9). 5. Religion corrects the intrigues of self-destructive commerce, and teaches honesty, forethought, and justice in business arrangements; thus checking waste, extravagance, and insolence, and these issue in the enjoyment of plenty (ver. 10). 6. Religion enjoins Sabbath observance and sanctuary services (ver. 2) which nourish

holiness in thought and life, sweeten character, purify the springs of action, incite to righteous and noble deeds, to social goodwill, to mutual regard, to sacred ministries, to reverence for Scripture, to recognition of the claims of the unseen world, and thus bring down upon all people the blessings of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (vers. 11, 12). III. WITHIN A RELIGIOUS NATION GOD PLEDGES HIMSELF TO DWELL. And where He makes His tabernacle (ver. 11) there—1. Happiness will be realised, the joy of the Lord will be known, “His lovingkindness, which is more than life,” will be enjoyed. 2. Security will be assured. “None make you afraid” (ver. 6), for He will be as a “defence to His people.” 3. Sanctity will flourish. Intercourse with God (ver. 12) will elevate, refine, and grace a people’s character and life. (*W. H. Jellie.*) *Temporal blessings connected with obedience*:—These temporal blessings—peace’s victory over all their enemies, the fruitfulness of the land, the enjoyment of God’s tabernacle in the midst of it—all are promised to obedience. This is still true of nations. Nations that are highest in Christian character will always be highest in every other national blessing. Just cast your eyes over the map of Europe; and if you had a thermometer, and could gauge the amount of living Christianity in each nation, you will find that the nation in which Christianity is purest, rises highest, spreads the farthest, descends the deepest, is the very nation that is highest in all that dignifies, ennobles, and blesses a nation. And so, in our own native land, the victory of our armies in the righteous warfare to which it is committed, the maintenance of our land in peace and prosperity against all foe and all invasion, will rest, not only upon the banners of our brave troops, not only upon the gallantry of our heroic sailors, but far more upon the living religion that saturates the masses of our country. It is righteousness that exalteth a nation, and sin is the ruin of a nation. If you will read the history of nations, you will find this universally true; no nation ever falls before a foreign foe—it always commits suicide. Nations die suicides; they are self-slain. Rome fell only because of its inner corruption; the beautiful sisterhood of Greek states fell by their universal depravity; and our nation will never fall before a foreign foe as long as it is—what it is now in a greater degree than any other—a nation that fears God, and works righteousness, and counts the sunshine of His favour more precious than gold and silver, and whatsoever things may be weighed or bought. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *The advantages of faithfully serving God*:—A Fingo, travelling through Hankey, where the L.M.S. have a station, sat down to rest at the door of the place of worship; and looking round on the houses, behind which the gardens were concealed, asked one of the deacons how the people got food in such a place, for he had formerly known it as a desert. The deacon told him to look at him and see if he was not in health and well clothed. He then called a fine child, and told the man to look at it and see if it was not well fed. The deacon then told him if he would attend service the next day he would see that it was so with them all. The Fingo rose to depart, and lifting up his eyes and his right hand to heaven, exclaimed, “It is always so where that God is worshipped!” (*Andrew Thomson, D.D.*) *The unbroken continuity of God’s gifts*:—There is in ver. 10 a promise as to the fulness of the Divine gifts, which has a far wider reach and nobler application than to the harvests and granaries of old Palestine. We may take the words in that aspect, first, as containing God’s pledge that these outward gifts shall come in unbroken continuity. And have they not so come to us all, for all these long years? Has there ever been a gap left yawning? has there ever been a break in the chain of mercies and supplies? has it not rather been that “one post ran to meet another”? that before one of the messengers had unladed all his budget, another’s arrival has antiquated and put aside his store? “Things grown common lose their dear delight.” “If in His gifts and benefits He were more sparing and close-handed,” said Luther, “we should learn to be thankful.” But let us learn it by the continuity of our joys, that we may not need to be taught by their interruption; and let us still all tremulous anticipation of possible failure or certain loss by the happy confidence which we have a right to cherish, that His mercies will meet our needs, continuous as they are, and be threaded so close together on the poor thread of our lives that no gap will be discernible in the jewelled circle. May we not apply that same thought of the unbroken continuity of God’s gifts to the higher region of our spiritual experience? His supplies of wisdom, love, joy, peace, power to our souls, are always enough, and more than enough, for our wants. If ever men complain of languishing vitality in their religious emotions, or of a stinted supply of food for their truest self, it is their own fault, not His. He means that there should be no parentheses of famine in our Christian life. It is not His

doing if times of torpor alternate with seasons of quick energy and joyful fullness of life. So far as He is concerned the flow is uninterrupted, and if it come to us in jets and spurts like some intermittent well, it is because our own evil has put some obstacles to choke the channel and dam out His Spirit from our spirits. The source is full to overflowing, and there are no limits to the supply. The only limit is our capacity, which again is largely determined by our desire. So after all His gifts there is more yet unreceived to possess. After all His self-revelation there is more yet unspoken to declare. Great as is the goodness which He has wrought before the sons of men for them that trust in Him, there are far greater treasures of goodness laid up in the deep mines of God for them that fear Him. Bars of uncoined treasure and ingots of massy gold lie in His storehouses, to be put into circulation as soon as we need, and can use them. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) **Ye shall make you no idols.—Idolatry interdicted :—**I. WHAT THE PRONENESS OF HUMAN NATURE TO IDOLATRY SUGGESTS. It shows both the dignity and depravity of man; that—1. He is endowed with religious instincts. Capable of worship, of exercising faith, hope, love, reverence, fear, &c. 2. He is conscious of amenability to some supreme power. Seeks to propitiate, secure favour, and aid. 3. He is apprehensive of a future state of existence. Ideas vague, indefinite, absurd, yet the outcome of inward presentiment, &c. 4. He is unable by light of nature to discover God. His knowledge is so faded, light so dim. How low the soul must have fallen to substitute “nothings” for the Eternal One! Heathenism has never of itself emerged into the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, as seen in the voice that has spoken from heaven, and has been recorded by holy men moved by the Holy Ghost. II. WHAT INDULGENCE IN IDOLATRY ENTAILS. 1. Degradation. Worship of heathen deities demoralising. In their temples, at their services, the rites observed are grovelling, and, in some instances, demoniacal. 2. Superstition. Devotees are duped by priests, enslaved by torturing ritualism, subject and victims of absurd delusions. 3. Misery. Fear the ruling passion, not love. Nothing ennobling, inspiring, quickening, comforting. Idol worship mocks the longings of the human soul, cannot appease its hunger, satisfy its thirst. III. HOW IDOLATRY MAY BE ABOLISHED. Darkness can only be dispersed by the letting in of light. The folly of idolatry must be shown, its helplessness, misery, sin by the spread of the written revelation of heaven, the preaching of the glorious gospel. (*F. W. Brown.*) *The common worship of the sanctuary :—*There are many who make light of the common worship of the sanctuary, and who are in the habit of depreciating the interest and value of its influences. They tell us that Nature’s temple is far grander than any human shrine; that the voices of the birds are a sweeter minstrelsy than that of a mediocre choir; that they find “sermons in stones” whose eloquence is mightier and more penetrating than that of a poor preacher with his string of stale platitudes; and that, therefore, a pleasant country walk is more profitable and sanctifying than an hour spent in the stuffy atmosphere of church or chapel. Nay, even their own fireside has more powerful charms, for have they not Bibles at home, and cannot they read for themselves? and can they not obtain far better sermons for a few pence per volume than they are likely to hear? No doubt there is much truth in such reasoning, but it ignores the social needs of human nature. Man is a social being; social worship is therefore a necessity of his nature. And its necessity has been universally felt. “Groves, mountains, grottoes, caves, streams, valleys, plains, lakes, as well as altars and temples, have been consecrated as the abodes of gods.” Everywhere men have sought out some shrine at which to offer common and united worship. And in Christian ages the house of prayer has ever been held in honour, and its services regarded as hallowed privileges by the best and wisest men. They meet a deep-seated need of human hearts. As Dr. Geikie has said, “There is a breadth of human experience, and of understanding of Divine things to be obtained in the great congregation, in the common confessions, the common prayers, the common praises, the common exhortation of the sanctuary, which would be sought in vain in solitudes.” As long as human nature is unchanged, the place of public worship cannot be superseded. (*Howard James.*) *Commonness of the idolatrous spirit :—*Yes, the orthodox Greek Churchman is grievously scandalised at the image-worship of the Romanist; it is flat idolatry, and he denounces it vehemently. But what are those pictures, many of them made to stand out with solid plates of gold and silver? Why, these are pictures of the Virgin or of her Son, as the case may be, and your anti-idolatrous Greek bows before these with voluntary humility. He hates image-worship, you see, but stands up for picture-worship. Behold how sinners disagree in name and unite in spirit!

Put Greek and Roman in a sack together and let the greatest idolater out first: the wisest solution would be to keep them both in, for Solomon himself would be puzzled to decide between them. Are there no such inconsistencies among ourselves? Do we not condemn in one form what we allow in another? Do we not censure in our neighbours what we allow in ourselves? This query need not be answered in a hurry; the reply will be the more extensive for a little waiting. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

Then I will give you rain.—*The philosophy of rain*:—To understand the philosophy of this beautiful and often sublime phenomenon, so often witnessed since the creation of the world, and essential to the very existence of plants and animals, a few facts derived from observation and a long train of experiments must be remembered.

1. Were the atmosphere everywhere at all times at a uniform temperature, we should never have rain, or hail, or snow; the water absorbed by it in evaporation from the sea and the earth's surface would descend in an imperceptible vapour, or cease to be absorbed by the air when it was once fully saturated.
2. The absorbing power of the atmosphere, and consequently its capability to retain humidity, is proportionably greater in warm than in cold air.
3. The air near the surface of the earth is warmer than it is in the region of the clouds. The higher we ascend from the earth the colder do we find the atmosphere. Hence the perpetual snow on very high mountains in the hottest climate. Now, when from continued evaporation the air is highly saturated with vapour, though, if it be invisible and the sky cloudless, if its temperature be suddenly reduced by cold currents descending from above, or rushing from a higher to a lower latitude, its capacity to retain moisture is diminished, clouds are formed, and the result is rain. Air condenses as it cools, and like a sponge filled with water and compressed, pours out the water which its diminished capacity cannot hold. How singular, yet how simple, the philosophy of rain! Who but Omniscience could have devised such an admirable arrangement for watering the earth? (Dr. Ure.)

Rain from God:—St. Ambrose, speaking of great drought in his time, when the people talked much of rain, he sometimes comforted himself with this hope, *Neomenia dabit pluvias* ("The new moon will bring us rain"); yet saith he, "Though all of us desired to see some showers, yet I wished such hopes might fail, and was glad that no rain fell, *donec precipibus ecclesie data esset*, &c., until it came as a return upon the Church's prayers, not upon the influence of the moon, but upon the provident mercy of the Creator." Such was the religious care of that good saint then, and the like were to be wished for now, that men would be exhorted not to be so much taken as they are with the vanity of astrological predictions, to read the stars less and the Scriptures more, to eye God in His providence, not the moon so much in its influence, still looking up unto Him as the *primus motor*, and upon all other creatures whatsoever as subordinate. (J. Spencer.)

Ver. 8. And five of you shall chase an hundred.—*Panic among soldiers*:—During the Italian war a panic occurred in a whole reserve corps d'armée of the French forces, and the account is given us by the Hon. Mr. R——, the editor of a prominent American journal, who was there, partook of the fright, and ran himself with the fugitives. Five Austrians, whose retreat was cut off, rode rapidly into the village where the reserve forces were stationed, with the design of giving themselves up. The frightened inhabitants cried out, "The Austrians are coming!" and ran for their lives. The soldiers followed suit—horse, foot, and dragoons, pell-mell, without waiting to take care of the wounded, ran fifteen miles without stopping. One wounded French general offered a large reward to be carried to a place of safety. Mr. R—— confesses to have run ten miles on foot before he stopped. A panic among the loyal troops in the first battle of Bull's Run in the American civil conflict, if not the cause of their defeat, greatly aggravated the disasters of the battle. (Lourie.)

Vers. 14-19. But if ye will not hearken.—*National transgression and disaster*:—

- I. A NATION'S PROGRESSIVE APOSTASY. 1. Passive indifference to Divine teachings and appeals: "Not hearken." 2. Non-compliance with Divine calls and claims: "Not do."
3. Contemptuous rejection of God's statutes: "Despise" (Mal. iii. 14, 15).
4. Spiritual revolt from all sacred demands: "Your soul abhor My judgments" (John iii. 20; Job xxiv. 13). A fearful departure from God.
5. Violation of all covenant relationship: "Ye break My covenant."

II. AN APOSTATE NATION'S CALAMITIES. 1. Sin brings disease and physical suffering in its train (ver. 16): "Terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes and

cause sorrow of heart." Impiety inevitably drifts into impurity. 2. Failure and penury follow quickly upon habits of indulgence and impurity: "Sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it" (ver. 16). Nothing succeeds in the hands of a dissipated and dissolute man, and he becomes a prey to his hated scorners and rivals. 3. A godless life invites the ravages of the enemy (ver. 17). God withdrew His protection, and adversaries swept down upon Israel. They who repudiate Divine government are "taken captive by the devil at his will," and serve their enemies. Sin is very cruel. It "slays" its victims; slaughters their virtue, peace, happiness, hopes; destroys precious souls. 4. Sin also fills the life of wrongdoers with terrors; they "flee when none pursueth." Even in nations there is "strong confidence" and "a sound mind" only when conscious of rectitude and the enjoyment of God's approval. It paralyses a people's heart to feel that Heaven is alienated and Divine favour lost. Armies, too, have gone with assurance into battles when convinced that God is with them—as Cromwell's "Ironsides"—while enemies have fled with panic, as did the Spanish Armada, when possessed with alarm that God was against them. 5. There are the yet darker calamities of abject overthrow and Divine desertion: "I will break the pride of your power, and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass" (ver. 19)—a picture of prostration and helplessness which finds verification in (1) Babylon's fall—now lying buried amid bleaching sands, emblem of rebuked pride; (2) the desolation of Jerusalem—now a waste scene, and her children the "tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast"; (3) the buried cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum—interred beneath volcanic ashes, a monument of sudden wrath on a voluptuous people. Such historic admonitions warn against national impiety, and call mankind to seriousness and prayer; for even in the solemn threatenings of God there lies an overt assurance of mercy, that "if a nation or individual will cease from apostasy and hearken unto Him" (ver. 18), He will turn aside the "seven times more" punishment for sins, and show the forgiveness in which He delights, and the salvation which the glorious gospel of His grace proclaims. (*W. H. Jellie.*) *God's warning against rebellion*:—I. How THEIR SIN IS DESCRIBED, which would bring all this misery upon them. Not sins of ignorance and infirmity—God had provided sacrifices for these; not the sins they repented of and forsook, but sins presumptuously committed and obstinately persisted in. 1. A contempt of God's commandments. (1) Despising His statutes; both the duties enjoined, and the authority enjoining them. Those are hastening apace to their own ruin who begin to think it below them to be religious. (2) Abhorring His judgments. They that begin by despising religion will soon come to loathe it; mean thoughts of it will ripen into ill thoughts of it. They that turn from it will turn against it, and their hearts rise at it. (3) Breaking His covenant. They that reject the precept will come at last to renounce the covenant. Observe, it is God's covenant they break—He made it, but they break it. Note.—If a covenant be made and kept between God and man, God must have all the honour; but if ever it be broken, man must bear all the blame; on him shall this breach be. 2. A contempt of God's corrections. Their contempt of God's Word would not have brought them to ruin if they had not added to that a contempt of His rod, which should have brought them to repentance. Three ways this is expressed. (1) "If you will not for all this hearken to Me" (vers. 18, 21, 27). If ye will not learn obedience by the things which you suffer, but be as deaf to the loud alarms of God's judgments as you have been to the close reasonings of His Word, and the secret whispers of your own consciences, you are obstinate indeed. (2) "If ye will walk contrary to Me" (vers. 21, 23, 27). All sinners walk contrary to God, to His truths, laws, and counsels, but those especially that are incorrigible under His judgments. The design of the rod is to humble them, and soften them, and bring them to repentance; but instead of this, their hearts are more hardened and exasperated against God, and in their distress they trespass yet more against Him (2 Chron. xxviii. 22). This is walking contrary to God. (3) "If ye will not be reformed by these things." God's design in punishing is to reform, by giving men sensible convictions of the evil of sin, and obliging them to seek unto Him for relief. This is the primary intention, but those that will not be reformed by the judgments of God must expect to be ruined by them. II. How THE MISERY IS DESCRIBED which their sin would bring upon them. 1. God Himself would be against them; and this is the root and cause of all their misery. (1) "I will set My face against you" (ver. 17); i.e., "I will set Myself against you, set Myself to ruin you." These proud sinners God will resist, and face those down that confront His authority; or the face is put for the anger—"I will show Myself

highly displeased at you." (2) "I will walk contrary to you" (vers. 24, 28). "With the froward He will wrestle" (Psa. xviii. 26). When God in His providence thwarts the designs of a people, which they thought well laid, crosseth their purposes, breaks their measures, blasts their endeavours, and disappoints their expectations—then He walks contrary to them. Note—There is nothing got by striving with God Almighty; for He will either break the heart or break the neck of those that contend with Him, will bring them either to repentance or ruin. "I will walk at all adventures with you"; so some read it, "All covenant lovingkindness shall be forgotten, and I will leave you to common providence." Note, those that cast God off, it is just with Him to cast them off. (3) As they continued obstinate, the judgments should increase yet more upon them. If the first sensible tokens of God's displeasure do not attain their end to humble and reform them, then (ver. 18), "I will punish you seven times more"; and again (ver. 21), "I will bring seven times more plagues"; and (ver. 24), "I will punish you yet seven times"; and (ver. 28), "I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins." Note—If lesser judgments do not do their work, God will send greater; for when He judgeth He will overcome. If true repentance do not stay process, it will go on till execution be taken out. Those that are obstinate and incorrigible, when they have weathered one storm, must expect another more violent; and how severely soever they are punished till they are in hell, still they must say there is worse behind, unless they repent. If the founder have hitherto melted in vain (Jer. vi. 29), the furnace will be heated "seven times hotter" (a proverbial expression used Dan. iii. 19), and again and again "seven times hotter." And who among us can dwell with such devouring fire? God doth not begin with the sorest judgments, to show that He is patient, and delights not in the death of sinners; but if they repent not, He will proceed to the sorest, to show that He is righteous, and that He will not be mocked or set at defiance. (4) Their misery is completed in that threatening (ver. 30), "My soul shall abhor you." That man is as miserable as he can be whom God abhors, for His resentments are just and effective. Thus, "if any man draw back," as these here are supposed to do, "God's soul shall have no pleasure in them" (Heb. x. 38); and He will spue them out of His mouth (Rev. iii. 16). It is spoken of as strange, and yet too true, "Hath thy soul loathed Sion?" (Jer. xiv. 19.) 2. The whole creation would be at war with them; all God's sore judgments would be sent against them, for He hath many arrows in His quiver. The threatenings here are very particular, because really they were prophecies; and He that foresaw all their rebellions knew they would prove so (see Deut. xxxi. 16, 29). This long roll of threatenings shows that evil pursues sinners. Here is (1) temporal judgments threatened. (a) Diseases of body, which should be epidemical (ver. 16). All diseases are God's servants, and do what He appoints them, and are often used as scourges wherewith He chastiseth a provoking people. The pestilence is threatened (ver. 25) to meet them when they are gathered together in their cities for fear of the sword. And the greater the concourse of people is, the greater desolation doth the pestilence make; and when it gets among the soldiers that should defend a place, it is of most fatal consequences. (b) Famine and scarcity of bread, which should be brought upon them several ways, as: (i.) By plunder (ver. 16): "Your enemies shall eat it up, and carry it off, as the Madianites did" (Judg. vi. 5, 6). (ii.) By unseasonable weather, especially the want of rain (ver. 19): "I will make your heaven as iron," letting fall no rain, but reflecting heat; and then the earth would of course be as hard and dry as brass, and their labour in ploughing and sowing would be in vain (ver. 26); for the increase of the earth depends upon God's good providence more than upon man's good husbandry. (iii.) By the besieging of their cities; for sure that must be supposed to reduce them to such extremity, as that they should "eat the flesh of their sons and daughters" (ver. 29). (c) War, and the prevalence of their enemies over them: "Ye shall be slain before your enemies" (ver. 17). (d) Wild beasts—lions, and bears, and wolves—which should increase upon them, and tear in pieces all that came in their way (ver. 22), as we read of two bears that in an instant killed forty and two children (2 Kings ii. 24). This one of the four sore judgments threatened (Ezek. xiv. 21), which plainly refers to this chapter. Man was made to have dominion over the creatures, and though many of them are stronger than he, yet none of them could have hurt him, nay, all of them should have served him, if he had not first shaken off God's dominion, and so lost his own; and now the creatures are in rebellion against him that is in rebellion against his Maker, and when the Lord of those hosts pleaseth, are the executioners of His wrath and ministers of His justice. (e) Captivity, or dispersion: "I will scatter

you among the heathen" (ver. 33) "in your enemies' land" (ver. 34). Never were more people so incorporated and united among themselves as they were; but for their sin God would scatter them, so that they should be lost among the heathen, from whom God had so graciously distinguished them, but with whom they had wickedly mingled themselves. Yet when they were scattered Divine justice had not done with them, but would draw out a sword after them, which should find them out, and follow them, wherever they were. God's judgments, as they cannot be outfaced, so they cannot be outrun. (f) The utter ruin and desolation of their land, which should be so remarkable that their very enemies themselves, who had helped it forward, should in the review be astonished at it (ver. 32). (i.) Their cities should be waste, forsaken, uninhabited, and all the buildings destroyed; those that escaped the desolations of war should fall to decay of themselves. (ii.) Their sanctuaries should be a desolation, *i.e.*, their synagogues, where they met for religious worship every Sabbath, as well as their Tabernacle, where they met thrice a year. (iii.) The country itself should be desolate, not tilled or husbanded (vers. 34, 35); then the land should enjoy its sabbaths, because they had not religiously observed the sabbatical years which God appointed them. They tilled their ground when God would have them let it rest, justly therefore were they driven out of it; and the expression intimates that the ground itself was pleased and easy when it was rid of the burthen of such sinners, under which it had groaned (Rom. viii. 20, &c.). The captivity in Babylon lasted seventy years, and so long the land enjoyed her sabbaths, as is said (2 Chron. xxxvi. 21) with reference to this here. (g) The destruction of their idols, though rather a mercy than a judgment, yet being a necessary piece of justice, is here mentioned, to show what would be the sin that would bring all these miseries upon them (ver. 30). (2) Spiritual judgments are here threatened which should seize the mind, for He that made that can, when He pleaseth, make His sword approach unto it. It is here threatened—(a) that they should find no acceptance with God (ver. 31). (b) That they should have no courage in their wars, but should be quite dispirited and disheartened (vers. 17, 36). Those that cast off the fear of God expose themselves to the fear of everything else (Prov. xxviii. 1). (c) That they should have no hope of the forgiveness of their sins (ver. 39; Ezek. xxxiii. 10). Note—It is a righteous thing with God, to leave those to despair of pardon that have presumed to sin; and it is owing to free grace, if we are not abandoned to pine away in the iniquity we are born in and have lived in. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*) *Imprecations among the ancients*:—Imprecations like those set forth in our section were not unusual among the ancients; one brief parallel may here be inserted. When the people of Cirrha and others had polluted the temple of Delhi and profaned its holy treasures, the Amphictyons, after having devastated their territories, and sold the inhabitants as slaves, protested and swore that no one should ever cultivate the devoted land, and they publicly pronounced this curse: "If any persons transgress this edict, whether private individuals, or a tribe, or a people, their land shall bear no fruit, and the women shall bring forth no children who resemble their fathers, but shall give birth to monsters; nor shall the beasts produce young of a normal shape; misfortune shall befall them in their wars, their tribunals, and their public assemblies; they themselves, with their houses and their whole race, shall be destroyed; and they shall never again present to the gods an acceptable offering." (*M. M. Kalisch, Ph.D.*) *God's warning a blessing*:—In the summer of 1884, when the cholera was raging in Spain, our newspapers constantly warned the people that dirt bred disease, and opened up a highway for the cholera to spread rapidly, if once it reached our shores. This theme was not dwelt on for the sake of frightening people, for the sake of the alarm, but to frighten them into doing a good thing which otherwise they would have left undone. The result, at least in New York City, was most beneficial. Alarm bred action and action cleansed the city as it never had been cleansed before. And not only did we have no cholera, but in the fall of 1885 the death-rate of the city had been unusually low. In this case forewarned was forearmed, and the warning was a blessing, and not a curse. The same is true of the patient and his wise physician. The latter sees, perhaps, that the manner of his patient's living is injurious. It will end fatally, so he warns him. He does not do it merely to frighten him, but to frighten him away from the folly of his present manner of life. (*A. F. Schaffler.*) *God's presence a source of blessing to a nation*:—When the king removes, the court and all the carriages follow after, and when they are gone the hangings are taken down; nothing is left behind but bare walls, dust, and rubbish. So if God removes from a man or a nation where He kept His court, His graces will not stay behind;

and if they be gone, farewell peace, farewell comfort; down go the hangings of all prosperity, nothing is left behind but confusion and disorder. (*J. Spencer.*) *God unchangeable*:—The sun hath but one simple act of shining; yet do we not see that it doth unite clay and straw, dissolve ice and water? It hardens clay, and melteth wax; it makes the flowers to smell sweetly, and a dead corpse to scent loathsomely; the hot fire to be cold, and the cold water hotter; cures one man with its heat, yet therewith kills another. What is the reason? The cause is in the several objects, and their divers dispositions and constitutions, and not in the sun's act of shining, which is one and the same thing. Or let a looking-glass be set in the window. Will it not represent to the eye diversity of objects? If thou go to it in decent and seemly apparel, shalt thou not see the like figure? If dejected, and in coarse raiment, will it not offer to thy view the same equal proportion? Do but stretch thyself, bend thy brow, and run against it, will it not resemble the like person and actions? Where now is the change—shall we conclude in the glass? No; for it is neither altered from the place nor in the nature. Thus the change of love and affection is not in God, but in respect of the object about which it is exercised. If one day God seem to love us, another to hate us, there is alteration within us first, not any in the Lord. We shall be sure to find a change, but it must be when we do change our ways; but God never changeth. Such as we are to ourselves, such will He be to us; if we run stubbornly against Him, He will walk stubbornly against us; with the froward He will be froward, but with the meek He will show Himself meek; yet one and the same God still, in whom there is not the least shadow of change imaginable. (*Ibid.*) *God proceeds from milder to sharper courses*:—The physician, when he findeth that the potion which he hath given his patient will not work, he seconds it with one more violent; but if he perceive the disease to be settled, then he puts him into a course of physic, so that, *medicè miserè*, he shall have at present but small comfort of his life. And thus doth the surgeon too: if a gentle plaster will not serve, then he applies that which is more corroding; and to prevent a gangrene, he makes use of his cauterising knife, and takes off the joint or member that is so ill affected. Even so God, when men profit not by such crosses as He hath formerly exercised them with, when they are not bettered by lighter afflictions, then He sends heavier, and proceeds from milder to sharper courses. If the dross of their sin will not come off, He will throw them into the melting-pot again and again, crush them harder in the press, and lay on such irons as shall enter more deep into their souls. If He strikes and they grieve not or they be so foolish that they will not know the judgment of their God, He will bring seven times more plagues upon them, cross upon cross, loss upon loss, trouble upon trouble, one sorrow upon the neck of another, till they are in a manner wasted and consumed. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 27–39. *Then I will walk contrary unto you.—God's determination to punish sinners*:—I. AN AFFECTING SUPPOSITION STATED. “If ye will not,” &c. The Lord here supposes that His people may commit three grievous sins: 1. The sin of disobedience. “If ye will not hearken unto Me.” Hence observe—(1) That the Lord in His Word speaks to us (Heb. viii. 12). (2) That whatever the Lord says in His Word it is our bounden duty to hear (Heb. iii. 7; 1 Thess. v. 20; James i. 19). (3) That we are too apt to turn a deaf ear to Him (Exod. v. 2; Psal. xii. 4). 2. The sin of incorrigibleness. “If for all this ye will not hearken.” Note here—(1) That afflictions sometimes have the nature of punishments (Jer. xiii. 21). (2) That punishment is the natural and necessary consequence of transgression. (3) That in the punishment which God inflicts He seeks our reformation (2 Chron. xviii. 22). (4) That our depravity in too many cases frustrates His designs (Zeph. iii. 2). 3. The sin of perverseness. “If ye walk contrary to Me.” Observe again—(1) That the Lord's pleasure is, we should walk with Him (Mic. vi. 8). (2) That we walk with the Lord when we walk in His way (2 Kings xx. 3; Eccles. xii. 13). (3) That walking otherwise than He has commanded is to show a perverse and untoward heart. II. AN ANFUL CONSEQUENCE DECLARED. “I will walk contrary also to you in fury.” Thus we see that—1. Conformable to our character will be our end. If God should deal thus with us (1) We shall lose the blessing which He imparts to His obedient followers (vers. 4–12). (2) Our expectations will issue in disappointment and vexation (Hos. viii. 7); and (3) Like chaff before the wind we shall speedily be carried to destruction (Psal. i. 4, 5). 2 Enforcement of these considerations: we see—(1) That a religion consisting of mere notions will never save a man. (2) That men are not at liberty, as some suppose, to live as they please. (3) That

God takes notice of the ways of all. (4) That if He displays His anger we should be anxious to find out the cause; and (5) That if any one perish he will have no one to blame for it but himself (Isa. iii. 11). (*Wm. Sleigh.*) *Desolation threatened to Israel*:—I. HOW HORRIFYING THE MISERIES WHICH MAY BEFALL A PRIVILEGED PEOPLE. The miseries of penury and siege (ver. 29); of captivity and slaughter (ver. 33); of anguish and derision (ver. 36); of pitiless misery and disaster (ver. 39). 1. None are so secure in grace and privilege that they can disregard the possibility of a fall. 2. None are so rich in sacred favours as to be beyond danger of their total loss. 3. None are so honoured by God's selecting and distinguishing grace but they may lapse into alienation and desolation. II. HOW AMAZING THE DISASTERS WHICH MAY DEVASTATE A BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY. Canaan was a wealthy land, a scene of loveliness, abundance, and delight. Yet on it came the disasters of depopulation (ver. 31), sterility (ver. 32), desertion (ver. 35)—even enemies abandoning it. 1. National plenty and prosperity are conditional upon national righteousness and piety. 2. National greatness and glory have been withered by the anger of an insulted God. 3. National strength and safety are only guaranteed as religion is fostered by the laws of a country, and in the habits and lives of its people. III. HOW PITEOUS THE PROFANATION WHICH MAY DESPOIL A NATION'S SANCTITIES! Canaan was the scene of Jehovah's sanctuary: the Temple rose on Zion; and the land sent up her tribes to the celebration of sacred feasts and to the holy worship of God. Yet all her "sanctuaries" were brought "unto desolation" (ver. 31), all the fragrance of her sacrifices became loathsome to Jehovah (ver. 31), and her desecrated Sabbaths were avenged in the bleak silence and loneliness which fell on hallowed scenes (ver. 34). 1. Religious favours, if abused, may be utterly withdrawn from us. 2. God loathes the offerings once delightful to Him, when the offerer's love is estranged. 3. Holy scenes and holy days become a barren mockery if a trifling spirit alienate the sacred Presence: "Ichabod!" (*W. H. Jellie.*)

Ver. 40-45. If they shall confess their iniquity.—*God's promises to penitents*:—I. WHAT IS THAT REPENTANCE WHICH GOD REQUIRES? 1. That we acknowledge our guilt. Our fathers' sins as well as our own are first grounds of national humiliation. Our own sins are the chief burden of personal contrition. But sin should be viewed in its true light, as "walking contrary to God" (Psa. li. 4). 2. That we justify God in His judgments. If we have dared to walk contrary to Him, is not He justified in "walking contrary to us"? Whatever inflictions He imposes we have reason to own it as less than our deserts (Ezra ix. 13), and that His judgments are just (Rev. xvi. 7). 3. That we be thankful for His dealings by which He has "humbled our uncircumcised hearts." Only real contrition can produce this. It realises mercy in judgment, and love in affliction. II. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN OUR REPENTANCE AND GOD'S MERCY. Repentance is void of merit. Even obedience is destitute of merit; "when we have done all we could we are unprofitable servants." The acknowledgment of a debt is a very different thing from a discharge of that debt. A condemned criminal may be sorry for his offences, but that sorrow does not obliterate his crime, still less entitle him to rewards. Yet there is connection between repentance and pardon, and meekness in the exercise of mercy towards the penitent—I. On God's part. For repentance glorifies God (Josh. vii. 19). 2. On the part of the penitents. It incites to loathing of the sin, and to adoration of Divine grace. So God insists on the condition, "If they be humbled, then will I pardon." For then God can do it consistently with His honour, and they will make a suitable improvement of the mercy vouchsafed them. III. THE GROUND AND MEASURE OF THAT MERCY WHICH PENITENTS MAY EXPECT. God's covenant with their ancestors was the basis and warrant of His mercy to Israel (vers. 42, 44, 45). His covenant with us in Christ is our hope and guarantee. 1. Be thankful that you are yet within reach of mercy. 2. Have especial respect unto the covenant of grace. It is to that God looks, and to that should we look also. It is the only basis on which mercy and redemption are possible. (*C. Simeon, M.A.*) *The bow in the cloud*:—I. THAT THE WAY WAS LEFT OPEN FOR THE REBELLIOUS TO RETURN. 1. It was the way of reflection. 2. It was the way of confession. 3. It was the way of humiliation. They were not to return proudly, feeling they had not been rewarded according to their iniquities. The way is still open for the vilest to return; for, the New Testament teaches that these are the steps in the ladder of life, out of sin to holiness, from earth to heaven, from self to God, viz.: Repentance, conversion, consecration. II. THAT IF THE REBELLIOUS RETURNED TO THE LORD IN HIS OWN APPOINTED WAY HE WOULD GRACIOUSLY RECEIVE THEM. 1. He would do so for the

sake of their fathers. He would remember His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 2. He would do so for the sake of His name. "For I am the Lord." He had purposed, as well as promised, to deal mercifully with them. 3. He would do so for the sake of the land. He had selected Canaan as the arena where He would specially display His glory to men, and He would not allow it to lie waste for ever. 4. He would do it for the sake of His covenant. "I will remember My covenant." The Lord does not make a covenant and then tear it rashly to pieces; if broken by man He will speedily renew, nor allow the irregularities and irreligion of men to thwart His beneficent arrangements. Here, indeed, was a resplendent bow of many colours, beaming with the beautiful light of the mild and merciful countenance of the Most High. What encouragement for sinful men to return to the Lord, "for He will have mercy upon them, and abundantly pardon." The Levitical law closes with offers of mercy, the last words of the law are words of entreaty and promise. (*W. H. Jellie.*)

Gains of a good ancestry:—"I will for their sake remember the covenant of their ancestors." I. THE VOWS AND PRAYERS OF A GOODLY PARENTAGE EXERCISE INFLUENCE UPON THE DIVINE PLANS. That "covenant" is thrice referred to as determining God's arrangements (vers. 42, 44, 45). Note Job's prayers for his children (Job i. 5; cf. with ver. 10), "Made a hedge about Job and about his house." II. OVER LONG INTERVALS THE INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL COVENANTS EXTEND. This "covenant" with Abraham was made 1900 years B.C. (Gen. xv. 13, 14). It is now 1900 years A.D., yet the word stands, "They are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. xi. 28, 29). God is at work, though He seems to wait. "In due season ye shall reap if ye faint not." Praying soul, anxious heart, clinging to the promises—"Hope, and be undismayed; God hears thy cries, and counts thy tears, God shall lift up thy head." III. HOW GRAND THE LINK BETWEEN A PARENT'S PIETY AND THE CHILDREN'S DESTINY! 1. Live and pray for your descendants. 2. Value the sacred benefits even though as yet unrealised, of a godly ancestry. 3. Rest in the unfailing pledge of God to reward piety and prayer. (*Ibid.*) *The advantage of submission*:—"It is recorded of Edward I., that, being angry with a servant of his in the sport of hawking, he threatened him sharply. The gentleman answered, It was well there was a river between them. Hereat the king, more incensed, spurred his horse into the depth of the river, not without extreme danger of his life, the water being deep and the banks too steep and high for his ascending. Yet, at last recovering land, with his sword drawn, he pursued the servant, who rode as fast from him. But finding himself too ill-horsed to outride the angry king, he reined, lighted, and, on his knees, exposed his neck to the blow of the king's sword. The king no sooner saw this but he put up his sword and would not touch him. A dangerous water could not withhold him from violence; yet his servant's submission did soon pacify him. While man flies stubbornly from God, He that rides upon the wings of the wind posts after him with sword of vengeance drawn. But when in dust and ashes he humbles himself, and stands to His mercy, the wrath of God is soon appeased.

CHAPTER XXVII.

VERS. 2-13. When a man shall make a singular vow.—*Laws concerning vows*:—I. THAT VOLUNTARY AND SPECIAL VOWS WERE PERMITTED BY THE LORD. Vows should be made cautiously, deliberately, and, in most instances, conditionally; because further enlightenment, or changed conditions may render their fulfilment undesirable, unnecessary, or even impossible. II. THAT VOWS WERE ACCEPTABLE TO THE LORD ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT WHICH PROMPTED THEM, AND IN WHICH THEY WERE PAID. When circumstances justified an Israelite repenting of his vow, it could be commuted or remitted, or some compensation offered in its stead. Jehovah would accept nothing that was recklessly or reluctantly presented. All adjustments and decisions were to be made according to the standards of the sanctuary, not according to human fallibility and caprice. Though a vow should not be literally performed, it must be perfectly fulfilled in respect to honourable intention and sacred fidelity. The state of heart, in the presentation of sacrifice, determined the value of the gift. This law has never been repealed. III. THAT FREEDOM OF CHOICE GIVEN IN THE FULFILMENT OF VOWS DID NOT CONTRAVENE THE PURPOSES OF THE LORD CONCERNING

HIS WORK AND WORSHIP. The compensation paid in lieu of the original vow went to sustain the sanctuary services, and the Lord reserved to Himself some unalienable rights. Some things when devoted could not be withheld or withdrawn under any circumstances. He demanded a tenth of the produce of the land, and enforced His claim with righteous and unrelaxing rigour. Thus the preservation and perpetuation of Jehovah's worship were secured, and not left contingent upon the fickleness and uncertainty of human devotedness. Righteousness lies at the foundation of the Levitical economy; is the basis of natural and revealed religion. Leviticus is a witness to Christ and His gospel. In Him we have combined all that the law embodied—Altar, Sacrifice, Priest. Simplicity, and purity of aims, loftiest motives, deepest meanings, and incomparable excellence, lift the law and the gospel infinitely above all other religions of the world. The superiority to Jewish narrowness and bigotry, to human sinfulness and shortsightedness, demonstrate their divinity of origin, mutual dependence, absolute authority, undying vigour, and inestimable worth. (*F. W. Brown.*) *The extraordinary in the service of God* :—This is part of the law concerning singular vows, extraordinary ones; which though God did not expressly insist on, yet if they were consistent and conformable to the general precepts, He would be well pleased with. Note—We should not only ask what *must* we do, but what *may* we do, for the glory and honour of God. As the liberal deviseth liberal things (Isa. xxxii. 8), so the pious deviseth pious things, and the enlarged heart would willingly do something extraordinary in the service of so good a Master as God is. When we receive or expect some singular mercy, it is good to honour God with some singular vow. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*) *The singular vow* :—I. Speaking in modern phrase, we should describe this chapter as the act of the old law on the "singular vow." This vow was distinguished from certain other vows common among the Hebrews by the circumstance that it was susceptible of redemption. We can all understand that a consecration of a man's self or of a man's estate might be so hurriedly or so thoughtlessly made (as in the case of Jephtha with his daughter) that the author of them would find out afterwards how rashly the promise had been given, and how unequal he was to the keeping it, and so be anxious to compound by a money equivalent for the more spiritual service he found himself incompetent to bring. This kind of engagement is called in the Hebrew the "Neder," and is further marked by the character of singularity or wonderfulness; whereas towards the end of this very chapter we have another vow provided for, and called the "Cherem," which, being accompanied with some sort of anathema or execration, allowed no redemption. But now, observe very carefully the method appointed for gaining release from the obligation. Moses was to arbitrate according to what he considered the ability of the applicant to render. "Pay so much," would be the decision of the lawgiver, "and thou mayest go free." But the remarkable and the beautiful thing is, that even that measure of relief to the vow-maker was not absolutely or invariably final. Moses might overestimate the resources of the devotee for the buying himself off from the personal service of the Tabernacle—Moses might adjudge too heavy a ransom—and therefore the law provided a yet further and more merciful escape. The man was at liberty to appeal from Moses to the priest. Aaron was the priest. His very name stands for a representative before God of the wants and the sorrows and the sins of the people; and hence to transfer the adjudication of a debtor's affairs from Moses to his brother would, as you can all see, be the introduction of a perfectly new element into the case to be tried. The appellant would be as poor in the presence of Aaron as he was in the presence of the former judge. He would also be as rich. And yet the very terms of the text are all but decisive on the fact that he would gain by carrying his cause before this new tribunal. Aaron would certainly—if we understand the law of the case—fix the money ransom at a lower figure. And the obvious reason is that Aaron, by virtue of his own calling, would make up for it—*i.e.*, for the deficiency—in some other way, and in some way in which Moses could not make up for it. We must not pronounce with any authority on the exact method in which the priest would settle with the poverty of a debtor, and make it possible for him to go free whom his brother would have handed over to the full penalties of the vow, to do, perhaps, Gibeonites' work as a hewer of wood or a drawer of water. But the probability is that the remedy in Aaron's hands would be the appointment of some easy offering in which the priest would render him the aid of his sacred functions. II. Now it will hardly require any one of us to be very deep in controversial divinity to understand that if we are going to Christianise this type and turn it to the account of a modern religious experience, we shall be treading on most critical, though it

may turn out very lawful and very instructive, ground. In a word, then, let us say we are now having no business whatever with an unregenerate man, nor any business whatever with the sacrifice of Christ as the only channel of his justification. The solitary topic of the text is a topic for men already in the covenant. Regeneration, and even justification, must be understood as settled already; and the vow-making of Leviticus must be looked upon wholly and solely as the service of the Christian, at peace with the law, but struggling with subsequent duties. Is there no difference? There is all the difference in the world between the terms on which the great God will take a man to heaven and the terms on which He will treat him when already in the covenant. In the former transaction the man may vow as he likes; he can pay nothing, and he is never asked to pay. In the latter transaction, where the former is finished, the man is commanded to pay, and struggles to pay; but, nevertheless, our point with you is that times without number he is unable to pay. The universal and the sad fact is that entire duty is what none of us can render. Even in the Church the law is too much for us. And what we have to do a hundred times a day, and all our lives long, is to fall back on the solitary and sufficient and omnipotent righteousness of Christ. We do greatly err if we limit the sacerdotal functions of Immanuel to the gaining us forgiveness at our conversion or the taking us to heaven when we die. We want a priest every moment; some one that is to furnish the balance of service and duty demanded by our profession, but never forthcoming. Those two men, Moses and Aaron, may be said to travel with the Christian every inch of his journey: Moses standing for what I ought to do and to be; Aaron standing for what I take refuge in as often as I come short or fall below, "If he be poorer than thy estimation." Which of us is not poorer than the Lawgiver's estimation? Can we pay what is due from us? We acknowledged, when first we believed, that we could do nothing of the kind. But remember that there is a power and a merit in the righteousness of Christ that continues at the disposal of the saint till the day of his death. Immanuel is certain to judge me, or, according to the text, to value me on other grounds than those of justice and of law: and the reason is that He has something to give me, something of His own. He is my Priest, and has business with the altar and the sacrifice, and under the gospel Christ is Himself all three. You who tell me my duty are only my lawgivers fresh from Mount Sinai. So is the Sermon on the Mount; so is my conscience; so is everything and every one, but Christ. But do you not see that if a Mediator, who for ever is holding up His righteousness on my behalf—if He values me my value alters? I am now not the bankrupt debtor who had not enough to pay, I am that debtor and some one else besides. I am a part of Christ. I bring now my poor offerings of duty, for I must still bring them, but I bring them covered with blood, and made worth something by blood. And, therefore, though I was not rich enough to pay what I owed as bare law sat and measured my resources, I can pay the uttermost farthing as soon as Jesus the Saviour adds His own Cross to my inheritance. (*H. Christopherson.*) *The provisions of righteousness and grace:*—Now, in the case of a person devoting himself, or his beast, his house, or his field, unto the Lord, it was obviously a question of capacity or worth; and, hence, there was a certain scale of valuation, according to age. Moses, as the representative of the claims of God, was called upon to estimate, in each case, according to the standard of the sanctuary. If a man undertakes to make a vow he must be tried by the standard of righteousness; and, moreover, in all cases we are called upon to recognise the difference between capacity and title. Moses had a certain standard from which he could not possibly descend. He had a certain rule from which he could not possibly swerve. If any one could come up to that, well; if not, he had to take his place accordingly. What, then, was to be done in reference to the person who was unable to rise to the height of the claims set forth by the representative of Divine righteousness? Hear the consolatory answer (ver. 8). In other words, if it be a question of man's undertaking to meet the claims of righteousness, then he must meet them. But if, on the other hand, a man feels himself wholly unable to meet those claims, he has only to fall back upon grace, which will take him up, just as he is. Moses is the representative of the claims of Divine righteousness. The priest is the exponent of the provisions of Divine grace. The poor man who was unable to stand before Moses fell back into the arms of the priest. Thus it is ever. If we cannot "dig" we can "beg"; and directly we take the place of a beggar it is no longer a question of what we are able to earn, but of what God is pleased to give. "Grace all the work shall crown, through everlasting days." How happy it is to be debtors to grace! How happy to take when God is glorified in giving!

When man is in question it is infinitely better to dig than to beg; but when God is in question the case is the very reverse. I would just add, that I believe this entire chapter bears, in an especial manner, upon the nation of Israel. It is intimately connected with the two preceding chapters. Israel made "a singular vow" at the foot of Mount Horeb; but were quite unable to meet the claims of law—they were far "poorer than Moses' estimation." But, blessed be God, they will come in under the rich provisions of Divine grace. (*C. H. Mackintosh.*) *Influence of a singular vow*:—I made a solemn vow before God, that if General Lee were driven back from Pennsylvania, I would crown the result by the declaration of freedom to the slaves. (*President Lincoln.*) *A vow kept*:—I met some time ago a gentleman residing in a retired town in Kent, who told that he was recently confined to his house by indisposition and inclement weather on a wintry Sunday. When the rest of the family were at church he took up George Müller's book, in which he describes "The Lord's Dealings" with him. He became so much interested in the author's life and labours that he promised his conscience, then and there, that if a certain business transaction he had in hand resulted in a certain amount of success, he would send the philanthropist £100 for his Orphans' Home. The success was realised, and he was then just on the point of sending off a cheque for the promised amount. (*Elihu Burritt.*) *Brittle vows*:—It is said of Andreas, one of the kings of Hungary, that having engaged himself by promise to go to the holy wars (as they then called them), went with all his forces, and coming to Jerusalem, only bathed himself there, as one that had washed off his promise, and so returned back again without striking one blow. Such is the case with many men at present, their promises, covenants, and agreements with others, though sealed and subscribed, prove too, too often as brittle as the glasses they drink in; no bounds will hold them, they rob the Grecians of their proverb, and own it themselves. For let but the worst of men say they will do this or that, as much as if they had sworn they would not do it, unless it be when they embark themselves in some unwarrantable actions, and the sun may sooner be thrust out of his sphere than they diverted from their adamant resolutions. (*J. Spencer.*) *The redemption of a singular vow*:—Incidents in Oriental history often read like parables. Men are moved by strange motives to do strange things; and the student from the west wanders in a maze of fancies and facts that are bewildering indeed. Thus it is that the early portion of a missionary's life in an eastern land teems with things that are unreal, and he is surrounded by fellow-men who seem in no true sense his fellows. There is so much that is inexplicable to him in their motives and conduct, that, until he gets a "clue to the maze," from a constant study of the religions that dominate their lives, his blunders are many, and sometimes even disastrous to his mission. The following is an instance of what I mean, and as it is recorded as an historical fact, will serve the purpose admirably:—"Abd-al-Muttalib once vowed that if he should be so greatly blessed as to have ten sons, one should certainly be devoted to Allah. In process of time, the number was fulfilled, and the reluctant father gathered his offspring in the Kaaba, and cast lots for the one to be sacrificed. The lot fell upon Abdalla, the beautiful son of his old age. The sacrificial knife was solemnly prepared"; and, like Abraham, he stood ready for the awful deed. But the lad's sisters came to the rescue. They knew that the Arabs offered camels in sacrifice, and in their abounding grief they entreated their father to cast lots between their brother and ten of these valuable creatures. He consented; but, to their sorrow, the lot fell a second time on the favourite boy. The number of beasts was then doubled, and the lot cast again; but still it fell upon the lad. Time after time trial was made, as the sorrowing sisters and the troubled father became more and more desperate in their anxiety to save the dear one. At last one hundred camels had been proffered, and then, to their great joy, the lot fell upon the beasts. Abdalla was saved. God had set his own value upon the devoted boy, and when an equivalent was provided he was free. Arabs value highly the "ships of the desert"; for they are so essential to their mode of life. But a human being is more precious than many of them. This was recognised when ten camels were proffered; but until an unprecedented number had been Divinely sanctioned, the true worth of the man was not fully believed in. Thus, all the world over, man has had to learn the value of his fellow by degrees. Many have not learnt the lesson yet, because only man's Maker and Redeemer can aright estimate the worth of man, and reveal it to us. This He hath done in the gift of His Only-begotten Son, who took man's place, that the lot might fall upon Him as of more than equal value with the whole of our race. (*Robert Spurgeon.*) *Philip Henry's vow*:—A good man named Philip Henry

resolved, when he was young, to give himself to God, and he did it in these words: "I take God the Father to be my Chief End; I take God the Son to be my King and Saviour; I take God the Holy Ghost to be my Guide and Sanctifier; I take the Bible to be my rule of life; I take all God's people to be my friends; and here I give my body and soul to be God's—for God to use for ever." That was Philip Henry's resolve, which he wrote out for himself when he was young; and he put at the end of it—"I make this vow of my own mind freely: God give me grace to keep it." (*C. Bullock.*) *A vow fulfilled*:—"I remember that when we arrived at the hotel at White Mountains, the ladies sat down to a cup of tea, but I preferred to take a walk alone. It was a beautiful spot. The sun was just then reclining his head behind Mount Washington, with all that glorious drapery of an American sunset, of which we know nothing in this country. I felt that I should like to be walking with my God on this earth! I said, 'What shall I render to my Lord for all His benefits to me?' I was led further to repeat that question which Paul asked under other circumstances, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?' The answer came immediately. It was this: 'It is true thou canst not bring the many thousands thou hast left in thy native country to see this beautiful scenery; but thou canst create beautiful scenes for them. It is possible on a suitable spot so to arrange art and nature, that they shall be within the walk of every working man in Halifax; that he shall go and take his stroll there after he has done his hard day's toil, and be able to get home again without being tired.'" He pondered the thought, prayed over it, and the next day resolved to carry it into execution. On his return to England he took immediate steps for the fulfilment of his purpose; the design of the proposed park was entrusted to the late Sir Joseph Paxton, and on the 14th of August, 1857, it was publicly opened. It covers twelve and a half acres of ground, and its entire cost was upwards of £30,000. (*Memoir of Sir Francis Crossley.*)

Ver. 25. According to the shekel of the sanctuary.—*Sanctuary measure demanded in small things*:—The law of the sanctuary is to regulate all. Full weight is sought for, but neither superfluity nor abatement. God loves a perfect balance and a just weight. We do not know whether or not there was a standard measure kept in the sanctuary; but it is very probable. Some, indeed, render the words, "shekel of holiness," i.e., a true shekel; still it is every way likely that the other is the true meaning, admitting that this rendering be right. There was probably a standard measure kept in the sanctuary, by which all other weights and measures were regulated. Here would be a type to Israel of the Lord's justice. Here, in the sanctuary of Jehovah, they found the source and regulating measure of all dealings in business between man and man, and of all similar dealings between God and man, through His priests. Would not this standard measure be felt to be a type of the Lord's original attribute of righteousness? He it is that judges; He it is that fixes what is right and what is wrong; He it is to whom all Israel must come to have thought and action weighed. May not 1 Sam. ii. 3 refer to this? Hannah's eye had rested on this standard measure, and so she sings, "By Him actions are weighed." Who shall stand before this holy God? He perceives what is wanting the moment He has adjusted His balances. He detects the want of faith in Cain at the altar; of true godly zeal in Jehu's heart; of love in Ephesus; of life in Sardis; of oil in the five virgins; of the wedding garment in the speechless guest. He judges according to the real weight—not the apparent. He judges "according as the work has been," not according as the show has been (1 Cor. v. 10; Rev. xx. 12, xxii. 12). (*A. A. Bonar.*)

Vers. 30-33. All the tithes of the land . . . is the Lord's.—*The history of tithes*:—I. THE SCRIPTURE RECORDS CONCERNING THE LAW OF TITHES. 1. Antecedent to the Mosaic legislation. The principle of dedicating a tenth to God was recognised in the act of Abraham, who paid tithes of his spoils to Melchizedek in his sacerdotal rather than his sovereign capacity (Gen. xiv. 20; Heb. vii. 6). Later, in Jacob's vow (Gen. xxviii. 22), the dedication of a "tenth" presupposes a sacred enactment, or a custom in existence which fixed that proportion rather than any other proportion, such as a seventh or twelfth. 2. The Mosaic statutes. These given in this section lay claim in God's name to the tenth of produce and cattle. An after enactment fixed that these tithes were to be paid to the Levites for their services (Numb. xviii. 21-24), who were to give

a tithe of what they received to the priests (vers. 26-28). The sacred festivals were later made occasion for a further tithe (Deut. xii. 5, 6, 11, 17; xiv. 22, 23); which was allowed to come in money value rather than in kind (Deut. xiv. 24-26). 3. Hezekiah's reformation. This was signalised by the eagerness with which the people came with their tithes (2 Chron. xxxi. 5, 6). 4. After the Captivity. Nehemiah made marked and emphatic arrangements concerning the tithing (Neh. x. 37; xii. 44). 5. Prophet's teachings. Both Amos (iv. 4) and Malachi (iii. 10) enforce this as a duty, by severely rebuking the nation for its neglect—as robbing God. 6. In Christ's day. Our Lord exposed and denounced the ostentatious punctiliousness of the Pharisees over their tithing (Matt. xxiii. 23). 7. Teaching of the New Testament. The fact of the existence of ministers as a distinct class, assumes provision made for their maintenance. The necessity for such provision, and the right on which it is founded, are recognised in such texts as Matt. x. 10; Luke x. 7; Rom. xv. 27; 1 Cor. ix. 7-14.

II. THE ECCLESIASTICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEMAND FOR TITHES. 1. The Fathers urged the obligation of tithing on the earliest Christians. The "Apostolical Canons," the "Apostolical Constitutions," St. Cyprian on "The Unity of the Church," and the writings of Ambrose, Chrysostom, Augustine, and other Fathers of both divisions of the early Church, abound with allusions to this as a duty; and the response was made, not in enforced tithing, but by voluntary offerings. 2. The legislation of the first Christian emperors recognised the obligation of maintaining the ministers of Christ. But while they assigned lands and other property to their support, they enacted no general payment of the tenth of the produce of the lands. 3. Ancient Church councils favoured tithings of land and produce, *e.g.*, the Councils of Tours, A.D. 567; the second Council of Macon, A.D. 585; the Council of Rouen, A.D. 650; of Nantes, A.D. 660; of Metz, 756. 4. Its first imperial enactment. Charlemagne (king of the Franks, A.D. 768-814, and Roman Emperor, A.D. 800-814) originated the enactment of tithes as a public law, and by his capitularies formally established the practice over the Roman Empire which his rule swayed. From this start it extended itself over Western Christendom; and it became general for a tenth to be paid to the Church. 5. Introduction of tithes into England. Offa, king of Mercia, is credited with its assertion here, at the close of the eighth century. It spread over other divisions of Saxon England, until Ethelwulf made it a law for the whole English realm. It remained optional with those who were compelled to pay tithes to determine to what Church they should be devoted, until Innocent III. addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury, A.D. 1200, a decretal requiring tithes to be paid to the clergy of the parish to which payees belonged. About this time also, tithes, which had originally been confined to those called *prædial*, or the fruits of the earth, was extended to every species of profit and to the wages of every kind of labour. 6. The great and small tithe. The great tithe was made upon the main products of the soil, corn, hay, wood, &c.; the small on the less important growths. To the rector the great tithes of a parish are assigned, and to the vicar the small. 7. Tithes paid "in kind." These claim the tenth portion of the product itself (vers. 30-33). This is varied by a payment of an annual valuation; or an average taken over seven years; or by a composition, which, in a bulk sum, redeems the land from all future imposts, rendering it henceforth "tithe free." (*W. H. Jellie.*)

Tithes:—I know of two men who started business with this view: "We will give to God one-tenth of our profits." The first year the profits were considerable; the tithe was consequently considerable. The next year there was increase in the profits, and, of course, increase in the tithe. In a few years the profits became very, very large indeed, so that the partners said one to another: "Is not a tenth of this rather too much to give away? Suppose we say we will give a twentieth?" And they gave a twentieth; and the next year the profits had fallen down; the year after they fell down again, and the men said to one another, as Christians should say in such a case, "Have not we broken our vow? Have we not robbed God?" And in no spirit of selfish calculation, but with humility of soul, self-reproach and bitter contrition they went back to God and told Him how the matter stood, prayed His forgiveness, renewed their vow, and God opened the windows of heaven and gave back to them all the old prosperity. (*Joseph Parker, D.D.*)

Giving to God:—What Abraham gave to Melchizedek, and Jacob vowed at Bethel, has ever appeared most natural for men to set aside for the Lord regularly—the tenth of all. Among the Israelites, there were several kinds of tithe, and yet all cheerfully paid; the tenth for the Lord, paid to the Levites (Numb. xviii. 21), and the next tenth, consecrated and feasted on at Jerusalem, or given away to the poor (Deut. xii. 6;

xxviii. 29). Seed or fruit might be redeemed; and there might be good reasons for a man wishing to redeem this part of the tithe. He might require to sow his field, and be in need of the seed of dates or pomegranates to replenish his orchard. Therefore permission is given to redeem these, though still with the addition of a fifth, in order to show that the Lord is jealous, and marks anything that might be a retraction, on the man's part, of what was due to the Lord. He may redeem this tithe, but it is done *cum notâ*. As to the tithe of herd and flock, this is not allowed. Whatever passes under the rod, good or bad, is tithed and taken, inalienably. The Lord does not seek a good animal, where the rod, in numbering, lighted on a bad as the tenth passed by; neither does He admit of the substitution of an inferior animal, if the rod has lighted on the best in the whole flock. He seeks just what is His due, teaching us strict and holy disregard of bye-ends and selfish interests. And thus this book—this Gospel of the Old Testament—ends with stating God's claims on us, and His expectation of our service and willing devotedness. As the first believers at Pentecost, rejoicing in pardon and the love of God, counted nothing dear to them, nor said that aught they possessed was their own, so ought we to live. We must sit loose from earth; and true love to our Redeemer will set us loose. This giving up of our possessions at God's call, teaches us to live a pilgrim life, and that is an Abrahamic life—nay, it is the life of faith in opposition to sight. The whole of this concluding chapter has been leading us to the idea of giving to the Lord all we have. It has been making us familiar with the idea, and by example inculcating the practice of like devotedness. God should be all in all to us; he is "God all-sufficient." Let us part even with common, lawful comforts, and try if He alone be not better than all. Like the child with the stalk of grapes, who picked one grape after another from the cluster, and held it out to her father, till, as affection waxed warm and self faded, she gaily flung the whole into her father's bosom, and smiled in his face with triumphant delight; so let us do, until, loosening from every comfort, and independent of the help of broken cisterns, we can say, "I am not my own! Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth whom I desire besides. Thou art to me, as Thou wert to David at the gates of death, 'All my salvation and all my desire.'" After so much love on God's part to us, displayed in rich variety of type and shadow, shall we count any sacrifice hard? (*A. A. Bonar.*) *Are tithes binding on Christians?*—In attempting to settle for ourselves this question, it is to be observed, in order to clear thinking on this subject, that in the law of tithe as here declared there are two elements—the one moral, the other legal—which should be carefully distinguished. First and fundamental is the principle that it is our duty to set apart to God a certain fixed proportion of our income. The other and—technically speaking—positive element in the law is that which declares that the proportion to be given to the Lord is precisely one-tenth. Now, of these two, the first principle is distinctly recognised and reaffirmed in the New Testament, as of continued validity in this dispensation; while, on the other hand, as to the precise proportion of our income to be thus set apart for the Lord, the New Testament writers are everywhere silent. As regards the first principle, St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, orders that "on the first day of the week"—the day of the primitive Christian worship—"every one" shall "lay by him in store as God hath prospered him." He adds that he had given the same command also to the churches of Galatia (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2). This most clearly gives apostolic sanction to the fundamental principle of the tithe, namely, that a definite portion of our income should be set apart for God. While, on the other hand, neither in this connection, where a mention of the law of the tithe might naturally have been expected, if it had been still binding as to the letter, nor in any other place does either St. Paul or any other New Testament writer intimate that the Levitical law, requiring the precise proportion of a tenth, was still in force—a fact which is the more noteworthy that so much is said of the duty of Christian benevolence. To this general statement with regard to the testimony of the New Testament on this subject, the words of our Lord to the Pharisees (Matt. xxiii. 23), regarding their tithing of "mint and anise and cummin"—"these ye ought to have done"—cannot be taken as an exception, or as proving that the law is binding for this dispensation; for the simple reason that the present dispensation had not at that time yet begun, and those to whom He spoke were still under the Levitical law, the authority of which He there reaffirms. From these facts we conclude that the law of these verses, in so far as it requires the setting apart to God of a certain definite proportion of our income, is doubtless of continued and lasting obligation; but that, in so far as it requires from all alike

the exact proportion of one-tenth, it is binding on the conscience no longer. Nor is it difficult to see why the New Testament should not lay down this or any other precise proportion of giving to income as a universal law. It is only according to the characteristic usage of the New Testament law to leave to the individual conscience very much regarding the details of worship and conduct, which under the Levitical law was regulated by specific rules : which St. Paul explains (Gal. iv. 1-5) by reference to the fact that the earlier method was intended for and adapted to a lower and more immature stage of religious development ; even as a child, during his minority, is kept under guardians and stewards, from whose authority, when he becomes of age, he is free. But, still further, it seems to be forgotten by those who argue for the present and permanent obligation of this law, that it was here for the first time formally appointed by God as a binding law, in connection with a certain Divinely instituted system of theocratic government, which, if carried out, would effectively prevent excessive accumulations of wealth in the hands of individuals, and thus secure for the Israelites, in a degree the world has never seen, an equal distribution of property. In such a system it is evident that it would be possible to exact a certain fixed and definite proportion of income for sacred purposes, with the certainty that the requirement would work with perfect justice and fairness to all. But with us social and economic conditions are so very different, wealth is so very unequally distributed, that no such law as that of the tithe could be made to work otherwise than unequally and unfairly. To the very poor it must often be a heavy burden ; to the very rich, a proportion so small as to be a practical exemption. While, for the former, the law, if insisted on, would sometimes require a poor man to take bread out of the mouth of wife and children, it would still leave the millionaire with thousands to spend on needless luxuries. The latter might often more easily give nine-tenths of his income than the former could give one-twentieth. It is thus no surprising thing that the inspired men who laid the foundations of the New Testament Church did not reaffirm the law of the tithe as to the latter. And yet, on the other hand, let us not forget that the law of the tithe, as regards the moral element of the law, is still in force. It forbids the Christian to leave, as so often, the amount he will give for the Lord's work, to impulse and caprice. Statedly and conscientiously he is to "lay by him in store as the Lord hath prospered him." If any ask how much should the proportion be, one might say that by fair inference the tenth might safely be taken as an average minimum of giving, counting rich and poor together (see 2 Cor. viii. 7-9). (*S. H. Kellogg, D.D.*)

Ver. 34. These are the commandments which the Lord commanded Moses for the children of Israel.—*The moral and ceremonial commandments, as compared with the gospel law :—*Many of these commandments are moral and of perpetual obligation. Others of them ceremonial and peculiar to the Jewish economy, which yet have a spiritual significance, and are instructive to us who are furnished with a key to let us into the mysteries contained in them ; for unto us by these institutions is the gospel preached, as well as unto them (Heb. iv. 2). And upon the whole matter we may see cause to bless God that we are not come to Mount Sinai (Heb. xii. 18). 1. That we are not under the dark shadows of the law, but enjoy the clear light of the gospel, which shows us Christ the end of the law for righteousness (Rom. x. 4). The doctrine of our reconciliation to God by a Mediator is not clouded with the smoke of burning sacrifices, but cleared by the knowledge of Christ, and Him crucified. 2. That we are not under the heavy yoke of the law and the carnal ordinances of it, as the apostle calls them (Heb. ix. 10), imposed till the time of reformation, a yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear (Acts xv. 10) ; but under the sweet and easy institutions of the gospel, which pronounces those the true worshippers, that worship the Father in spirit and truth, by Christ only, and in His name, who is our Priest, Temple, Altar, Sacrifice, Purification, and All. Let us not therefore think that because we are not tied to the ceremonial cleansings, feasts, and oblations, a little care, time, and expense will serve to honour God with. No, but rather have our hearts more enlarged in free-will-offerings, to His praise, more inflamed with holy love and joy, and more engaged in seriousness of thoughts, and sincerity of intention. Having boldness to enter into the holiness by the blood of Jesus, let us draw near with a true heart, and in full assurance of faith, worshipping God with so much the more cheerfulness and humble confidence, still saying, Blessed be God for Jesus Christ. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*) *The covenant in its relation to nations and individuals :—*

The last chapter of the book is taken up with directions for individual worship, on the details of which we cannot enter; but this general thought is suggested, that though the nation as a whole may lose its covenant standing, the way is always open for individuals. There is much comfort in this thought, in view of such dark times as those to which the prophetic part of the preceding chapter points. The door of mercy is never shut, however dark and degenerate the times may be. However wickedness may abound in the world, and coldness and deadness in the Church, God will always have His witnesses, and they will always have their opportunities. This word is never changed, "Whosoever will, let him come." In all times religion in the last resort must be an individual matter between the soul and God. No man can be saved in a crowd; but neither can any man be lost in a crowd. And sometimes, when the great multitude seems to carry all before it, God still may have His seven thousand men, known to Him alone, who have brought their individual offerings to Him, and "never bowed the knee to Baal." Remember the comfort that was given to Daniel, when his spirit was ready to faint in the prospect of the dark days which the prophetic vision had disclosed. "Go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." "Go thou thy way"—in times of apostasy and darkness, it is for the individual believer to leave the destinies of the world and of the Church in the hands of Him who "doeth all things well," and seek only to be faithful to his own duty. As for others: "shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" And as for thee, "thou shalt rest"—there is the fulfilment of the Sabbath and all the sabbatic series—"and stand in thy lot at the end of the days"—there is the fulfilment of the jubilee and all the eighth day series. Amid all the secularities and unbelief and disobedience of the times, let us seek to maintain communion with God, and bring our individual offerings, however "singular" they be, and we shall certainly find that "the joy of the Lord is our strength," and that His thoughts of love expressed in the feasts of the old covenant will be fulfilled for us, and then at the end of the days we shall enter on our sabbath of rest, and our jubilee of joy eternal. (*J. M. Gibson, D.D.*)

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BY

✓
REV. JOSEPH S. EXELL, M.A.

NUMBERS.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF NUMBERS.

THE NAME OF THE BOOK.—Bunsen entitles it “The Muster-roll.” But the thought which gives unity to this book is very concrete and definite. Both to the book of prophetic legislation, or Exodus, and to Leviticus, the book of sacerdotal or cultus legislation, there is annexed the book of the kingly calling of Israel under its King Jehovah—the book which treats of the host of God, of the discipline of the army, of its typical march from Sinai to Canaan, from the Mount of God to the elementary conquest of the world under the standard of the Ark of the Covenant, and under the guidance of Jehovah; and because this march is typical, it is darkened and checked in many ways by the power of sin. Another designation, “The wandering towards Canaan,” is partly too indefinite, partly too narrow, because the wandering as a whole had already begun with the Exodus from Egypt. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*)

THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE BOOK.—Much which has been said upon the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch generally, applies with special force to the authorship of this book. One portion, viz., the catalogue of the stations or encampments (xxxiii.) is expressly ascribed to Moses (ver. 2). Some of the legislative enactments which are found only in this book, or which are recapitulated in Deuteronomy are expressly assigned to Moses in Joshua—(1) the law that the Levites were to have no separate inheritance of land (Josh. xiii. 14, 33; xiv. 3, 4, cf. Num. xviii. 20–24; Deut. x. 9; xiv. 27; xviii. 1, 2), but only cities to dwell in, with their suburbs taken out of the inheritance of the other tribes (Josh. xxi. 2, cf. Num. xxxv. 1–4); (2) the assignment by lot of the inheritance of the nine tribes and a half on the west of the Jordan, and of the two tribes and a half on the east of Jordan (Josh. xiv. 2, 3; xviii. 7, cf. Num. xxvi. 55; xxxii. 33; xxxiii. 54; xxxiv. 13). The presumption thus afforded that this book was written by Moses, is confirmed by the numerous indications which it contains that it is the work of a contemporary writer, who lived in the desert, and who was familiar with the history, customs, and institutions of Egypt. The minuteness of the details respecting the order of the march through the wilderness, and the various incidents which occurred in the course of it, the remarkable manner in which the history and the legislation are interwoven, and more particularly the insertion of additional legislation arising out of the protracted wanderings in the desert (*e.g.*, xix. 14), point to the conclusion that the writer of the book was either an eye-witness of the scenes which he records, or a forger whose skill has been unequalled in after ages. The topographical notices, again, testify to an acquaintance with the history of Egypt (*e.g.*, xiii. 22), and also with that of the surrounding nations, previously to the entrance into Canaan (*e.g.*, xxi. 13); whilst the allusions to Egyptian customs, products, and institutions, and also to particular incidents of Egyptian history, are such as cannot, with any great amount of probability, be ascribed to any writer between the days of Moses and those of Solomon (*e.g.*, xi. 5–7; xxi. 5–9; xxxiii. 4, 6–8). Again, the contrast between the general allusions to the topography of Canaan, such as might well have been obtained from traditional sources, or from the reports of the spies, as compared with the more

minute descriptions given in Joshua, precisely corresponds with the recorded history of Moses. Thus, while in Joshua the boundaries of Canaan are expressed with great minuteness, in Numbers they are laid down in general terms (*cf.* Josh. xv. with Num. xxxiv.). It may be observed further, that the fact that the boundaries assigned to the promised land were never actually realised, even in the days of David and Solomon, affords a strong argument in support of the belief that the books in which they are described were not written at the late period to which they are assigned by some modern critics, in which case the original assignment would naturally have been made to accord with the actual extent of the kingdom. It must be observed, further, that the statistics of this book stop short of the death of Moses, and that the records of families are restricted to the Mosaic era. Thus, *e.g.*, we read of the promise given to Phinehas and to his seed after him of an everlasting priesthood (xxv. 13), and we find mention of the part which Phinehas took in one of the latest expeditions in which Moses was engaged (xxxi. 6); but we must have recourse to the books of Chronicles and of Ezra if we desire to obtain information concerning his descendants. (*C. J. Elliot, M.A.*)

THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE BOOK.—1. The narrative commences with “the first day of the second month of the second year after they were come out of Egypt” (i. 1); and the death of Aaron at the first encampment during the final march on Canaan (xx. 2) took place in the first day of the fifth month of the fortieth year (xxxiii. 38). 2. Between these two dates, therefore, intervene no less than 38½ years (*cf.* Deut. ii. 14), the long and dreary period of tarrying in the wilderness till the disobedient generation had wasted away. 3. The solemn rehearsal of the law contained in Deuteronomy was commenced by Moses after the overthrow of Sihon and Og, in the beginning of the eleventh month of the fortieth year (Deut. i. 3, 4). 4. We have, consequently, from the death of Aaron to the opening of Deuteronomy a space of exactly six months, in which all the events narrated in the fourth part of this book (xx. 1 to end) would seem to have occurred, with the probable exception of the defeat of the king of Arad. 5. Those events are many and remarkable. After the tedious years of suspense were once passed, the history of the chosen people hurries on, not without a sort of dramatic propriety, to a crisis. Crowded as this space is, it yet has room enough for the incidents here assigned to it. 6. The first month of the six was passed at the foot of Mount Hor in mourning for Aaron (xx. 29). But it is likely that during this month a part of the host was engaged in revenging upon the king of Arad the molestation inflicted by him on the Israelites during their journey from Kadesh to Mount Hor. 7. Next ensued the journey “from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea to compass the land of Edom” (xxi. 4); and this, being about two hundred and twenty miles to the brook Zered, would be accomplished within four weeks. 8. The appearance of the host in the plains of Moab brought them into the neighbourhood of Sihon, king of the Amorites. The policy pursued by him of resisting the progress of Israel with all his forces (xxi. 23) caused his overthrow to be speedy and total; as was also for like reasons that of Og, king of Bashan. The two battles at Jahaz and Edrei probably took place both within a fortnight; *i.e.*, towards the middle of the third of the six months in question. 9. The issue of the conflict with the Amorite kings determined Balak to send for Balaam (xxii. 2). The distance from Moab to the nearest point of the Euphrates is about three hundred and fifty miles, and Pethor may have been yet more distant. But as Balak was urgent, and could of course command all facilities for travelling, two months would amply suffice for his ambassadors to go and return twice over; and for the delivery by Balaam of his prophecies (xxii–xxiv.). No doubt during these weeks the Israelites were engaged in completing and consolidating their conquest of Gilead and Bashan. 10. We have thus a margin of at least six weeks left, during which occurred the seduction of Israel by the wives of the Midianites, and the consequent plague (xxv.); the second numbering of the people in the plains of Moab (xxvi.); and the war upon the Midianites (xxvii.). 11. It is accordingly in full consistency that the death of Moses is spoken of (xxxii. 2) in connection with the Midianitish war, and as following close upon it; and that Balaam after quitting Balak had not yet returned home when that war occurred, and was taken captive amongst the Midianites. (*T. E. Espin, D.D., in Speak. Com.*)

THE BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATOR.

NUMBERS.

CHAPTER I.

VER. 1. *In the wilderness of Sinai.—In the desert: an illustration of the life of the good in this world:—*I. THE NATURAL TRIALS OF THE DESERT. 1. Barrenness. Temporal and material things cannot satisfy spiritual beings. 2. Homelessness. The soul cannot find rest in this wilderness world. 3. Pathlessness. Man, if left to himself, is bound to stray and lose himself. 4. Perilousness. The wiles of the devil, the seductions of the world, and the lusts of the flesh. 5. Aimlessness. The years pass, opportunities come and go, and so little seems accomplished, so little progress made in our character, so little true work done. II. THE DIVINE PRESENCE IN THE DESERT. 1. Divine communication in the desert. God's voice is never silent. He is ever speaking in the sounds and silences of nature; through Scripture; and by His Holy Spirit. 2. Divine provision in the desert. "The Lord will give grace and glory; no good will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." 3. Divine shelter and rest in the desert (Psa. xc. 1). 4. Divine direction in the desert. (1) By the leadings of His providence. (2) By the teachings of the sacred Scriptures. (3) By the influences of the Holy Spirit. 5. Divine protection in the desert. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper." "If God be for us, who can be against us?" "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" III. THE DIVINE USES OF THE DESERT. 1. That the generation of slaves might pass away. There is much in us that must die and be buried before we can enter upon the inheritance of spiritual perfection. Our craven-hearted fears, our carnal lusts, our miserable unbelief, must be buried in the desert. 2. That a generation of free men might be educated. In the desert we are being trained by God into spiritual perfection and power for service and blessedness. Conclusion: 1. Ponder well the Divine design of our life in this world. 2. By the help of God seek its realisation in ourselves. (*W. Jones.*)

Vers. 2, 3. *Take ye the sum of all the congregation.—Reasons for numbering the people:—*Not because God would understand whether they were sufficient for number, or able for strength, to encounter their enemies, forasmuch as nothing is unknown to Him or impossible for Him to bring to pass, who is able to save as well with a few as with many. 1. For order's sake: that there should be no occasion of contention for primacy, but that every tribe and family should know his place and time, when to remove and when to stand still, when to fight with their enemies, and in every point what to do. 2. That such things as were to be paid for the use of the tabernacle might the more easily be collected when they were separated according to their tribes, and the tribes according to their families, and the families according to the household, man by man. 3. To testify His exceeding great love toward them and special care over them. A faithful shepherd will many times count the sheep committed to him, lest any should be missing. 4. Lastly, they are severally and distinctly numbered every tribe by itself, that in time to come it might be certainly known of what tribe and family Christ Jesus, the promised Messiah, should be born. (*W. Attersoll.*) *Reasons for the census taking:—*1. To prove the accomplishment of the promise made to Abraham, that God would multiply his seed exceedingly; and renewed in Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 14). Now it appears that

there did not fail one tittle of that good promise, which was an encouragement to them to hope that the other promise of the land of Canaan for an inheritance should always be fulfilled in its season. Therefore God would have Israel numbered, that it might be upon record how vastly they were increased in a little time, that the power of God's providence and the truth of His promise may be acknowledged by all. It could not have been expected, in any ordinary course of nature, that seventy-five souls (which was the number of Jacob's family when he went down into Egypt) should in two hundred and fifteen years multiply to so many hundred thousands. It is therefore to be attributed to an extraordinary virtue in the Divine promise and blessing. 2. It was to put a difference between the true-born Israelites and the mixed multitude that were among them. None were numbered but Israelites. All the world is but a lumber in comparison with those jewels. Little account is made of others; but the saints God has a particular property in and concern for (2 Tim. ii. 19; Phil. iv. 3). The hairs of their head are numbered; but He will say to others, "I never knew you, never made any account of you." 3. It was in order to their being marshalled into several districts, for the more easy administration of justice, and their more regular march through the wilderness. It is a rout and a rabble, not an army, that is not mustered and put in order. (*Matthew Henry, I.D.*) *Israel's host mustered*:—1. The order for this enumeration is Divine. God gave the order, and He appointed the men who should fulfil it. It may be asked, Why does the Lord now sanction the doing of this work, and in the subsequent ages curse David for doing, substantially, the same thing? The answer is twofold: First, it was not the Lord, but Satan, who tempted David to number Israel; and, secondly, it was done for the gratification of David's personal pride and ambition. Further, it may be said, this was done against the protest of the general-in-chief of his armies (see 1 Chron. xxi. 3, 4). When God commands it is always safe to obey; but when Satan incites us we are to beware. There are several reasons why God commanded this muster-roll to be made now. (1) The promise I had been made to Abraham of an exceeding great multiplication of his seed. It was now designed that they should see how this promise had been fulfilled, even amid the heartless bondage of Egypt. (2) This He demanded should be done carefully and certainly. There is nothing easier than to miscalculate numbers, especially where the basis of reckoning is careless. Here He orders this to be done by an individual count. (3) It was only those who were able to go forth to war who were numbered. The blind, the lame, the diseased, and the aged were not enrolled. It is the Lord's plan in all the ages, never to ask a man to do what he is incompetent to perform. On the other hand, He expects every one to do all he is able to do. The men selected for this enrolment were "renowned men." Heads of their families and their tribes—princes in Israel. Sometimes the great, the wealthy, and the wise attempt to excuse themselves from the service of God. They are too much busied with their own concerns. But there are those who wear crowns and coronets who do pray and labour in Christ's cause. They are worthy standard-bearers in the army of the Lord. Like Queen Victoria and Lord Shaftesbury, like Coligny and Condé, like the electors of Germany in the time of the Reformation, they stand forth doing the Lord's will, and accomplishing His purposes. We see here, further, with what quickness and promptness this work was done. It would seem as if only a few days were consumed in doing a work so vast. Thus when God calls us to do His work there is to be no delay. "The King's business requires haste." No one has a right to be an indifferent or idle worker. Another thought here: only Israelites were to be mustered. No one of the mixed multitude is to be put upon the rolls. They could not be intrusted on the army-rolls. They were more ready for a ferment than for a fight. No wonder that the immortal Washington, on an occasion of great importance and peril, said, "Put no one but Americans on guard to-night." So God would not allow any one but His own people to fight His battles, or to do His work. In the numeric record Judah is found to have the largest number of men. "This deserves notice in connection with the blessing pronounced on that tribe in Gen. xlix. 8-12, 'Thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise.'" Judah was the grand leader of all the princes and tribes of Israel. God designed that He should be so, as his was the tribe from which Immanuel was to come. The whole number was six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty. With three exceptions, Russia, Germany, and France, this is larger than the regular army of any nation now on the face of the globe. Of course, the war-footing of many other nations is greater than this; but this is an amazing regular army for that day and age. But, vast as it was, it was all swal-

lowed up in thirty-eight years from this time, because of unbelief and sin. Only two of this great number escaped the general destruction; namely, Caleb and Joshua. So multitudes who profess to be soldiers in the Lord's army are wasted by death or become inefficient and useless. One of the great defects in all our Churches is want of organisation. Herein were the beauty and the strength of this mustering. The Levites, however, were exempted from this enrolment. In all ages the priestly caste of men has been generally free from war-service; so the Levites, by the appointment of God, were free. To them were committed the spiritual interests of the tribes, the worship and service of God, the offering of sacrifices, and the expounding of the law. "They warred the warfare of the tabernacle." So we think no minister should be a soldier, a lawyer, a physician, a business man, or a farmer. He cannot do these things without lowering the standard of his calling and materially injuring his efficiency. (*Lewis R. Dunn, D.D.*)

The numbering of the people (a homily for the census day):—I. A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE CENSUS, which is being taken to-day in every town, every hamlet, every remote habitation of the United Kingdom. The Israelites dealt largely in statistics. At all the great turning-points in their history a census was taken. This Book of Numbers owes its name to the fact that it records two census-takings; one at the beginning, the other at the close of the forty years' sojourn in the wilderness. An admonition to fill up the census-papers with exactness and for conscience' sake.

II. MEDITATIONS PROPER TO THE CENSUS DAY. 1. The filling up of a census-paper is, in itself, a piece of secular business. Yet I do not envy the man who can perform it without being visited with holy feeling. The setting down of the names of one's household brings up many tragic memories. The setting down one's own age, after a lapse of ten years, summons us to count our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom. 2. The Lord keeps an exact register of His people. There is a Book of Life in which are inscribed the names of all whom He has chosen. How true this is the whole Scripture bears witness (Exod. xxxii. 30; Isa. iv. 3; Ezek. xiii. 9; Luke x. 20; Phil. iv. 3; Heb. xii. 23; Rev. xiii. 8). We commonly think of this as a book which is shut and sealed. The Lord only knoweth them that are His. A man may ascertain his own acceptance with God. (*W. Binnie, D.D.*)

The numbering of the people:—I. THE AUTHORITY FOR THIS NUMBERING. Leaders of men should be well assured of two things in the movements which they inaugurate—1. That they have the Divine approval of their undertakings. The movement which is approved by God, and well prosecuted, shall advance to splendid triumph. 2. That they are actuated by worthy motives in their undertakings. A sinful, selfish motive will vitiate our enterprises and mar our works. "The Lord looketh at the heart." Let us scrutinise our motives. II. THE PLACE OF THIS NUMBERING. "In the wilderness of Sinai." 1. In a desert. (1) Privation. (2) Peril. (3) Perplexity.

2. In a desert where the tabernacle of God was. III. THE TIME OF THIS NUMBERING. Exactly one month after the setting up of the tabernacle (Exod. xl. 2, 17) and about eleven months from the time of their arrival in the desert of Sinai. The people abode in this desert nearly a whole year (comp. Exod. xix. 1 with Num. i. 1 and x. 11). What was the reason of this protracted halt? That they might be instructed in their relations to God and to each other; that they might learn lessons of duty and worship; that they might be taught to reverence and obey God. There are times and circumstances in which standing still is the speediest advance. IV. THE MANNER OF THIS NUMBERING. They were to take account of—1. Only the males.

2. Only the males above twenty years old. 3. Only the males above twenty years old who were in vigorous health—"able to go forth to war." 4. They were to be numbered "after their families," that it might be known of what tribe and of what particular house every able man was. 5. The numbering was to be individual, and by name. The census was minute. (1) The Lord chooses fit instruments for the accomplishment of His purposes. (2) The Lord is perfectly acquainted with every one who is fitted for His work. V. THE DESIGN OF THIS NUMBERING. 1. The organisation of the army. 2. To manifest the Divine faithfulness. 3. To show the Divine power. 4. To the promotion of order. 5. To exhibit, on the coming of the Messiah, the correspondence of the event with the predictions concerning it. 6. To illustrate the care of God for His people generally and particularly. The Lord's care over His people is most minute and constant and tender. (*W. Jones.*)

The numbered people:—1. In common matters men count possessions, which are choice and dear and prized. They whose mean joys are fixed on this world's pelf thus calculate their gold. Their coffers are oft opened. Do we, then, indulge unfounded fancy when in God's numbering we read God's love? Do not clear

characters here write that His people are thus numbered because loved—counted, because prized? 2. Who are numbered? The young, the weak, the female, stand apart. None are enrolled but they whose age and strength enable them for war. Christ's service is a mighty work, a determined fight. About a year has passed since the last numbering of this family. The Levites then formed part of the collected mass. They are not now included. They stand apart, a separate portion. But mark a wondrous fact. The number then and now amounts exactly to the same. Israel has surrendered Levi's tribe, but Israel's forces are not thereby less. We never lose by giving to the Lord. 3. Once more survey the numbered people. You are inclined to say this band will safely reach the promised land. Surely their willing steps will ever run in the appointed way. Alas! two, and two only, steadfastly adhere. Ah, unbelief! It is the sin of sins, the misery of miseries, the hopeless malady, the death of souls, the bar which shuts out Christ. (*Dean Loe.*) *Counting mercies and days*:—We may again learn of these gracious numberings of His people to number often with ourselves His mercies vouchsafed unto us, that we may send up thankful thoughts to His majesty for them. Such an holy numbering used Jacob when he said, "O Lord, with my staff came I over this river, and now I return with much wealth." How many great men, of all callings, may thus number God's favour towards them since their first beginning, in cities and towns, where little stocks have grown to great sums. What a fit meditation is this? and how shall the Lord like this kind of numbering? We may also remember what the Psalm says, and learn to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. But you may say this numbering was restrained to the Jews, and even so was God's love, in some sort, for a time. But when Christ came, then there went out a decree from Augustus Cæsar that all the world should be taxed, which could not be without numbering of them. And therefore by Christ the partition-wall is broken down, and the comforts of God's numbering of them imparted to us, and to be approved by us to our joy, praying with him that so prayed, "Grant, good Lord, that in Thy numberings of Thy people I may be ever one." (*Bp. Babington.*) *The census paper*:—The census paper may be, by God's blessing, the means of bringing home some very telling facts. You, who are going to sign it, are ten years older than when last a similar paper lay before you. Ten years gone! gone for ever! Is not this something to make you thoughtful? The census papers will show what increase and progress has been made throughout the country. Mark this. There is no idea of failure or decrease. Can you show marks of Christian progress as clear? Whether you have prospered in your everyday work or not, enjoyed health and happiness, or had to bear sickness, disappointment, and even bereavement—in any case have you, as if forgetful of the past, still kept "pressing forward" for the prize of your high calling in Christ Jesus? Is there no decrease, no failure? You will write down your Christian name, condition, and profession. Your Christian name! Many a man's name is his character. There are names which in every rank, profession, business, and trade, are coupled with skill, courage, honesty, and truth: their names are, as it were, registered in the book of greatness. There is a book in which the names of Christians are registered (*Phil. iv. 3*). Is your Christian name entered there? Does your Christian name suggest before God and His angels, to your neighbour, and yourself, a Christian character. Perhaps your condition has not altered. You are still what you were ten years ago: Have all who are under your roof learnt to see in you a kind friend, a good father or mother, a forbearing master or mistress, a steward conscious that you must give account to God of the duties and responsibilities of your trust? Perhaps it has altered. You have married, and children have been granted to you. Have you been, and are you, a true Christian parent, caring for the souls of your children as well as their bodies, training them by your words and example for Heaven? Or, perhaps, the last ten years have been full of sadness to you. You are now a widow or widower, an orphan, or childless, a lone being. Have you learnt, though the heart was torn, to look up to the Father in heaven who chastens with suffering all whom He loves? And does the question the census paper asks you about your profession suggest no similar question about your Christian profession? Are you careful never to say or do anything which will bring discredit upon that profession? Do you watch the thoughts of your heart, that nothing base, or impure, or careless, shall enter in to dwell there? In the Book of the Revelation, Christians are taught that "all, small and great, shall stand before God and be judged out of those things written in the books, according to their works." Then will be the great census; the names, ages, conditions, and professions of all will be known. **Able**

to go forth to war.—*The lawfulness of war*:—I. This teacheth us that A GODLY MAN MAY LAWFULLY BE A WARRIOR. If war were not in itself lawful, God would never have a muster taken of such as are able to bear arms. True, every good profession may be abused. Abraham is said to be the father of the faithful, yet he made war, and overthrew the enemies that had spoiled Sodom, and carried away the riches of it as a prey, and was not reprov'd of Melchizedeck, the priest of the living God, but refreshed together with his army. The like we might say of Moses, Joshua, the Judges, and other godly kings, who fought many battles by the commandment of the Lord. When the soldiers heard the preaching of John, the forerunner of Christ, they asked him what they must do; he did not dissuade them from war, but gave them directions how to behave themselves in that honourable profession. Neither did Peter, being sent for to come to Cornelius, command him to follow a new trade of life. Neither did Paul persuade Sergius Paulus, the deputy, a prudent man, to renounce that calling, which no doubt they would have done if the profession of chivalry had not stood with the profession of Christianity. II. THE REASONS TO CONFIRM THIS TRUTH. 1. God doth command it, and therefore doth allow it as just and lawful. 2. As God gave direct commandment, so the people of God going forth to battle were to call upon Him for a blessing, and to sanctify the work by prayer, and in doing so have been heard. Things in their own nature unlawful are so filthy that no invocation of God's name can cleanse them; nay, they make such prayer foul and abominable. Seeing, therefore, God blesseth and delivereth such as go to war, it must needs follow that war and true religion may well stand together, so that one and the same man may be both a warrior and yet religious. (*W. Attersoll.*) *Able to fight*:—Then there were some who were not able. There were some who were not designed for military pursuits. The Lord would say here: Examine the people; go carefully over them as to force, capacity, and providential destiny, and arrange that those who are able to go forth to war in Israel may be ready. There is always that wonderful other side. The Lord does not pour contempt upon men who cannot fight. He knows what they can do, and He will bless them if they keep within their capacity and their Divine call. Each man's business should be to inquire, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? am I a soldier, a leader, a sailor? am I a home-keeper? am I intended for obscurity? am I to be written down amongst Thy feeble ones? Thy will be done. Nor let us limit this word "soldier" to what we understand commonly by war. Let us get away from these narrow limitations and look at life largely. The fact is that life itself is war. You cannot get away from strife. You cannot get away from it in business; you found it in the nursery before you found it in the market-place. The Church is a battlefield. What, then, is to be done? Everything depends upon the spirit in which the strife is urged. We may go forth to good wars with an evil intent. Or we may take it good-heartedly, with a great rising of gladness within the soul, saying, "This is Thy way, Lord, that we are to be made strong by fight; we begin by conflict, we are not to have our own way in the world; but give us the good spirit, loving, magnanimous." The great fight is within. If you are a living man, you are at war with yourself. Even supposing all your friends and enemies were at one with you, there would be a great war in the soul. You must do the evil deed. Yet you do not want to do it; you dare not speak about it; the war is secret, silent, profound, vital. God give you strength! You may overcome yet. Life is not only a war, but the war may be conducted under the very presence and with the very blessing of Christ. Whoso goes forth to war in that power comes back at eventide more than the conqueror. The text reads as if it were a direction in statistics. We cannot exclude the element of statistics from spiritual aggression and spiritual defence. How strong is God's army in numbers? "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing," saith the wise book; and God conceals from us the exact numerical strength of His army. The statistics of the army are kept in heaven. What if it should turn out that a little child's little finger has won more victories than all the embattled hosts that went forth in mail? What we have to do is for each man to do his own share of the war, fight as if everything depended upon him. Christianity is the military religion. It will fight; it was born to fight. Christianity is dead against all evil. Not against great vulgar crimes only; there is not a magistrate on the bench who does not delight to punish crime. Crime is overt, external, rough, vulgar, and men are paid to sentence it to hard labour. Christianity deals with the spring, with the deceitful heart. Christianity is at war with motive, purpose, thought, intention of the heart. Therefore much of its war is done silently. It is not therefore the less vital and the less tremendous.

Christianity insists that we shall fight evil spirits. It is soul against soul, spirit against spirit, thought against thought. There is no tragedy so sublime, so overwhelming, as the fight between the soul and the devil. Do not expect to win all at once. You are winning a little every day. Whatever fight you are waging you believe to be good, the mere fighting of the battle makes you stronger; you may be driven back for a little time, but you will come up again. Only, in God's name, for Christ's sake, do not lose your heart, or you will lose yourself. Let there be no doubt as to which side you are upon. People who are going between this side and that side will be of no use in the fight and no use in the council. Let us have definiteness of position. Let us have a clear, simple, honest profession of religion. Nor let any soul be discouraged because it cannot do much in the way of public battle. Some conquer by patience. Patience!—who can write the history of that great conqueror? Patience, that hardly sighs; patience, that scarcely ever turns its eyes to the clock to see how the weary time is going; patience, that puts the best view upon every case; patience, that sits up for the wanderer, though midnight be passed, saying all the while, that it really did not want to sleep; it is the inner interpretation of things; it is God's view of life; it is love at its best. You are not doing much public fighting mayhap, but let me tell you what you are doing—you are succouring the soldiers that are out in the field; you spake so kindly to the good man when he left home in the morning that he went out as strong as ten men. And you are but some poor obscure servitor; your place is in the kitchen; you do what are called the humbler duties of life, but you make the whole house glad. You make the man of business go forth a happier and stronger man in the morning because of your simplicity and faithfulness and daily care. Understand that whoever gives one of Christ's soldiers a cup of cold water with a loving hand and a loving glance wins part of the victory. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Our duty to the state:*—He is not worthy to be a member of a state, by whom the state is no whit bettered. The Romans well understood this, when they instituted their censors, to inquire into every man's course of life, and to note them, *carbōne nigro*, with a character of infamy, that could not give some good account of their life. It is a thing pitiful to consider how many there are in this land of ours whose glory is their shame, the very drones and cumber-grounds of their country, the chronicle of whose life was long since summed up by the poet, *Nos numerus sumus et fruges consumere nati*; no better than ciphers if you respect the good they do. But let them know that God will have no mutes in His grammar, no blanks in His almanack, no dumb shows on His stage, no false lights in His house, no loiterers in His vineyard. (*J. Spencer.*)

Vers. 4-16. A man of every tribe: every one head of the house of his fathers.—*Rank and service:*—I. CO-OPERATION IN DIVINE SERVICE. 1. The toil of Moses and Aaron would be lessened. 2. The accomplishment of the task would be facilitated. 3. The envy of the princes would be prevented. Grumblers are seldom found among the workers of the Church. II. SOCIETY'S NEED OF LEADERS. 1. Because they are at present indispensable to social order and progress. Certain objects of utmost importance to society cannot possibly be attained without cohesion of purpose and effort on the part of a large number of men, and such cohesion is impossible without leaders. "Amongst the masses," says Guizot, "even in revolutions, aristocracy must ever exist; destroy it in nobility, and it becomes centred in the rich and powerful Houses of the Commons. Pull them down, and it still survives in the master and foreman of the workshop." 2. Because of the differences in the faculties of men. These men were "princes" from the nobility of their birth: and they were probably men distinguished also for their abilities. "We must have kings," says Emerson, "we must have nobles; nature is always providing such in every society; only let us have the real instead of the titular. In every society, some are born to rule, and some to advise. The chief is the chief all the world over, only not his cap and plume. It is only this dislike of the pretender which makes men sometimes unjust to the true and finished man." III. THE GRAND CHARACTERISTIC OF TRUE LEADERS. They are pre-eminent in service. (*W. Jones.*) These are the names of the men.—*The Lord knows the number and the names of all who belong to Him:*—As this book of Moses beareth the title of Numbers, so a great part of it is spent in numbering of the people, to assure us that God hath numbered those that are His, and none escape His knowledge or sight. The Lord knoweth perfectly who they are that are His, both what their numbers and what their names are (1 Kings xix. 10, 18; Rom. xi. 3, 4; Psa. cxlvii.

5; Isa. xl. 26). The reasons are not hard to be gathered. 1. The knowledge of God is so exact and perfect that most secret things are known and the smallest are regarded of Him. 2. Christ Jesus setteth forth Himself as the true Shepherd of His sheep. A shepherd knoweth his own sheep. 3. All His people are evermore present with Him, wheresoever they be; yea, albeit they be absent from Him. Uses: 1. This giveth singular comfort to all God's children, if anything else be able to minister them comfort. If an earthly prince should vouchsafe to look upon us, and single us out from the rest, and call us by our names, how would we rejoice, and how much would we esteem that the king would stoop so low as to know us? Do we live as contemptible persons to the men of this world? and will they not once vouchsafe to know us? Let not this trouble us, we cannot sink down in destruction; but rather let us lift up our heads, assuring ourselves that albeit they turn themselves from us, yet God looketh upon us: and though they seek to root out our names from the earth, yet He will know us and call us by our names. 2. We may gather from hence the wretched state of all the ungodly. For as it is a great part of the comfort of all God's children that He will know them; who, as they have a regard to know God in this life, to know Him in His word and other means appointed for their salvation, so shall they be known of God in His kingdom, and acknowledged before the angels in heaven: so this is not the least of the misery belonging unto all that work iniquity, that God will not know them. Though He know them by the general knowledge of His power and providence, yet He will not see them with the eye of His pity, nor touch them with the hand of His favour, nor hear them with the ear of His bounty, nor speak unto them with the mouth of His goodness, nor compass them with the arm of His protection, nor come unto them with the feet of His presence, nor behold them with the face and countenance of His lovingkindness. Can there be a more miserable condition described and felt than this is? 3. Seeing all that are God's are numbered of Him, and have their names written in His book, this serveth to seal up the assurance of our salvation and election to eternal life (2 Tim. ii. 19). 4. Seeing the Lord knoweth us, it is our duty also to seek to know Him in all love and obedience. We must all of us begin to know Him here in this life, that we may know Him perfectly in the life to come. Here we must see Him as it were through a glass darkly, that hereafter we may see Him face to face fully. If we do not know Him in His word and sacraments, we shall never know Him in His kingdom. This knowledge of God necessarily required of us consisteth in these points following—(1) We must confess Him to be the Sovereign and Highest Good, in comparison of whom all things are reputed as nothing, being as dross and nothing to be desired with Him. (2) It behoveth us to depend upon Him, and to put our whole trust in Him alone, not in any man or angel: for then we make flesh our strength, and so lean upon a broken staff that cannot stay us, but will deceive us. (3) We must draw near unto Him in time of need, as to the fountain of all goodness, with all reverence and humility craving all things of Him by hearty and fervent prayer. If we call upon Him, He hath promised to reveal Himself unto us. (4) We must give Him thanks for all blessings received from Him, not only in prosperity, but in adversity. (5) We must seek the knowledge of His ways and word, and increase in the knowledge thereof, which bringeth us to eternal life. As we grow forward in knowledge, so we grow forward unto life: and when our knowledge shall be perfected, then our life shall be perfected in the next world. Lastly, we must yield obedience unto Him and His word. (*W. Attersoll.*) *God's knowledge of His people*:—I. THE GREAT TRUTH HERE IMPLIED. God knows His people individually and altogether. 1. This is philosophical. If God is infinite, He must know all things. Nothing can be so great as to surpass His comprehension; nothing so small as to escape His notice. 2. This is Scriptural. (1 Kings xix. 14-18; Psal. i. 6; lvi. 8; cxlvii. 3, 4; Isa. xl. 26-31; Mal. iii. 16, 17; Matt. vi. 25-34; x. 29, 30; John x. 3, 14, 27; Phil. iv. 3; 2 Tim. ii. 19; Rev. iii. 5; xxi. 27). II. THE PRACTICAL BEARINGS OF THIS GREAT TRUTH. 1. To restrain from sin. 2. To promote sincerity of life. 3. To promote humility. 4. To quicken reverence towards God. 5. To comfort the godly under reverses. (*W. Jones.*) They declared their pedigrees.—*The pedigree declared*:—"Can I declare my pedigree?" It is greatly to be feared there are hundreds, if not thousands, of professing Christians who are wholly incompetent to do so. They cannot say with clearness and decision, "Now are we the sons of God" (1 John iii. 2). "Ye are all the children of God," &c. "And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed," &c. (Gal. iii. 26, 29). "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God,

they are the sons of God," &c. (Rom. viii. 14, 16). This is the Christian's "pedigree," and it is his privilege to be able to "declare" it (cf. John iii. 5; James i. 18; 1 Pet. i. 23; Eph. v. 26). The believer traces his pedigree directly up to a risen Christ in glory. His genealogical tree strikes its roots into the soil of the new creation. Death can never break the line, inasmuch as it is formed in resurrection. We can easily see, from this chapter, how essential it was that every member of the congregation of Israel should be able to declare his pedigree. Uncertainty on this point would have proved disastrous; it would have produced hopeless confusion. We can hardly imagine an Israelite, when called to declare his pedigree, expressing himself in the doubtful manner adopted by many Christians nowadays. We cannot conceive his saying, "Well, I am not quite sure. Sometimes I cherish the hope that I am of the stock of Israel; but at other times I am full of fear that I do not belong to the congregation of the Lord at all. I am all in uncertainty and darkness." Much less could we imagine any one maintaining the monstrous notion that no one could possibly be sure as to whether he was a true Israelite or not until the day of judgment. Now, may we not legitimately ask, "If a Jew could be certain as to his pedigree, why may not a Christian be certain as to his?" We would urge this point at the outset. It is impossible for any one to recognise and rally round the proper "standard" unless he can declare his "pedigree." Progress in wilderness life—success in spiritual warfare, is out of the question if there be any uncertainty as to the spiritual pedigree. We must be able to say, "We know that we have passed from death unto life," "We believe and are sure," ere there can be any real advance in the life and walk of a Christian. We do not mean to say you cannot be saved without this. God forbid we should say any such thing. But we ask, Are such able to go forth to war? They cannot even know what true conflict is; on the contrary, persons of this class mistake their doubts and fears, their dark and cloudy seasons, for true Christian conflict. It is when we stand in the clear daylight of God's full salvation—salvation in a risen Christ—that we really enter upon the warfare proper to us as Christians. (*C. H. Mackintosh.*) *An honest pedigree*:—Dr. Livingstone, the famous explorer, was descended from the Highlanders, and he said that one of his ancestors, one of the Highlanders, one day called his family around him. The Highlander was dying; he had his children around his death-bed. He said, "Now, my lads, I have looked all through our history as far back as I can find it, and I have never found a dishonest man in all the line, and I want you to understand you inherit good blood. You have no excuse for doing wrong. My lads, be honest."

Vers. 20-46. Those that were numbered. — *The first army of Israel, an illustration of the Church militant*:—I. THE NECESSITY OF THIS ARMY. The Church must be militant. 1. Internal foes have to be conquered. Carnal appetites, evil passions, &c. 2. External foes have to be conquered. Ignorance and superstition, immorality and irreligion, dirt and disease, vice and crime. II. THE AUTHORITY FOR ORGANISING THIS ARMY. God's command. III. THE COMPOSITION OF THIS ARMY. 1. Israelites only. Thoroughly decided Christians are needed now. 2. Able men only. Christ gives strength even to the weak and timid. 3. All the able men. None exempt. We must either vanquish our spiritual enemies, or they will vanquish us. Neutrality is out of the question here. Neither can we do our fighting by proxy. IV. THE CONQUERING SPIRIT OF THIS ARMY. When our faith in God is strong, we are invincible. When it fails, we are overthrown by the first assault of the enemy. True faith gives glorious visions to the spirit, inspires us with heroic courage, girds us with all-sufficient strength. Conclusion—1. A call to decision. "Who is on the Lord's side?" 2. A call to courage. Our arms are tried and true; our great Leader is invincible; let us then "be strong and of a good courage." 3. A call to confidence. Our courage, to be true, must spring from faith. By trust we triumph. (*W. Jones.*) *The necessity of war*:—I believe in war. I believe there are times when it must be taken. I believe in it as a medicine. Medicine is not good to eat, but when you are sick it is good to take. War is not a part of the gospel; but while men and the world are travelling on a plain where they are not capable of comprehending the gospel, a rude form of justice is indispensable, though it is very low down. If you go to a plain still higher, war seems to be a very poor instrumentality. And if you go yet higher and higher till you reach that sphere where the crowned Sufferer stands, how hideous war seems! In the earlier periods of society it is recognised as having a certain value; but its value is the very lowest, and at every step upward, till you come to this central

Divine exhibition, it loses in value. Always it is a rude and uncertain police of nations. It is never good. It is simply better than something worse. Physical force is the alternative of moral influence; if you have not one, you must have the other. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Vers. 47-54. **The Levites . . . were not numbered.**—*The Levites and their service an illustration of the Christian ministry*:—The Levites were exempted from military service, and set apart for the service of the tabernacle. In any wise arrangement of the affairs of human society provision will be made for the requirements of the spiritual nature of man. I. THE TRUE CHRISTIAN MINISTER SHOULD MANIFEST SOME FITNESS FOR THE WORK BEFORE HE IS DESIGNATED THERETO. In determining the trade which their sons shall learn, wise parents will consider their respective inclinations and aptitudes. An artist would perhaps make a poor minister; a successful merchant might utterly fail as a barrister. Is there less aptitude required in the work of the gospel ministry than in the other pursuits of life? Adaptation of voice, of mind, of character, &c. II. THE TRUE CHRISTIAN MINISTER IS CALLED OF GOD TO HIS WORK. III. THE WORK OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER DEMANDS HIS ENTIRE DEVOTION THERETO. IV. A FAITHFUL DISCHARGE OF THE DUTIES OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER IS ESSENTIAL TO THE WELL-BEING OF SOCIETY. V. PERSONAL HOLINESS OF HEART AND LIFE ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE FAITHFUL DISCHARGE OF THE DUTIES OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY. Levites separated from other tribes for sacred work. Their outward separation intended to show separation from worldliness and sin. They who have to do with holy things should themselves be holy. (*W. Jones.*) *The Levites not numbered*:—We shall see them afterward numbered by themselves, but they were not put in the common reckoning, because God had chosen them to be His possession, and separated them from the rest of the people. And lest any man should think that Moses did ambitiously prefer the tribe of Levi, whereof himself descended, he sheweth he did it not of his own head, but by the special commandment of God. Their office is declared—to take the charge of the Tabernacle and worship of God, that when they were to take their journey they should carry it, and when they were to stay and pitch their tents they should set it down and look to it with all diligence. And as God would not have them encumbered in affairs unproper to them and impertinent to their calling, so He would not have others that were not of their tribe and family to break into their function, as it were to invade another man's possession; nay, He denounceth death to such as were strangers from that tribe that should presume to meddle with those holy things, or set their hands unto them. An example hereof we have in Uzzah (2 Sam. vi.). We learn from hence that it is the duty of the ministers of God's Word to exercise themselves only in things of their calling; they must wait upon the office to which they are appointed. They are not to be distracted from their calling by worldly matters that no way belong unto them (chap. iii. 6, 7). And doubtless it is great reason that they should content themselves with their own callings, that so they may please Him that hath called them, and forego all that may disturb them in the course whereunto they ought to tend. We must be like soldiers that are called to bear arms. The reason and comparison is pressed by the apostle to this purpose (2 Tim. ii. 3, 4). Secondly, the multitude is great, and the difficulty much of those things which are required of the minister, belonging rightly and duly to his calling, in regard whereof we may say (2 Cor. ii. 16). Were that a wise servant, who having both his hands full, and more than he can well do, should, besides his master's work, undertake a new and another burden of some other man's business, which of right doth not belong unto him? (*W. Attersoll.*)

CHAPTER II.

Vers. 1, 2. **Pitch by his own standard.**—*The marshalling of Israel, and its lessons*:—I. THEY ALL DWELT IN TENTS; and when they marched carried all their tents along with them (Psa. cvii. 4). This represents to us our state in this world. 1. It is a movable state; here to-day and gone to-morrow. 2. It is a military state; is not our life a warfare? II. Those of a tribe were to pitch together, EVERY MAN BY HIS OWN STANDARD. It is the will of God that mutual love and affection, converse and communion, should be kept up among relations. Those that are of

kin to each other should, as much as they can, be acquainted with each other, and the bonds of nature should be improved for the strengthening of the bonds of Christian communion. III. Every one must KNOW HIS PLACE, and keep in it. They were not allowed to fix where they pleased, nor to remove when they pleased; but God quarters them, with a charge to abide in their quarters. It is God that appoints us the bounds of our habitation, and to Him we must refer ourselves (Psa. xlvii. 4); and in His choice we must acquiesce, and not love to flit, nor be as the bird that wanders from her nest. IV. Every tribe had its standard, flag, or ensign, and it should seem every family had some particular ENSIGN OF THEIR FATHER'S HOUSE, which were carried, as with us the colours of each company in a regiment are. These were of use for the distinction of tribes and families, and the gathering and keeping of them together; in allusion to which the preaching of the gospel is said to lift up an ensign, to which the Gentiles shall seek, and by which they shall pitch (Isa. xi. 10, 12). God is the God of order, and not of confusion. These standards made this mighty army seem more beautiful to its friends, and more formidable to its enemies. The Church of Christ is said to be as terrible as an army with banners (Cant. vi. 10). V. They were to pitch ABOUT THE TABERNACLE, which was to be in the midst of them, as the tent or pavilion of a general in the centre of an army. They must encamp round the tabernacle—1. That it might be equally a comfort and joy to them all, as it was a token of God's gracious presence with them (Psa. xlii. 5). The tabernacle was in the midst of the camp, that it might be near to them; for it is a very desirable thing to have the solemn administration of holy ordinances near us, and within our reach. The kingdom of God is among you. 2. That they might be a guard and defence upon the tabernacle and the Levites on every side. No invader could come near God's tabernacle, but he must first penetrate the thickest of their squadrons. If God undertake the protection of our comforts, we ought in our places to undertake the protection of His institutions, and stand up in defence of His honour, and interest, and ministers. VI. Yet they were to pitch AFAR OFF, in reverence to the sanctuary, that it might not seem crowded and thrust up among them; and that the common business of the camp might be no annoyance to it. They were also taught to keep their distance, lest too much familiarity should breed contempt. But we are not ordered, as they were, to pitch afar off; no, we are invited to draw near, and come boldly. The saints of the Most High are said to be round about Him (Psa. lxxvi. 12). God by His grace keeps us close to Him. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*) *Israel typical of the Christian Church*:—I. THE ONE ISRAEL. 1. Their real oneness of descent. The children of Abraham. 2. Their original condition. All bondsmen. 3. Their Divine deliverance. Brought out of Egypt, &c. 4. In one Divine covenant. Promises, &c. 5. Journeying to the one inheritance. 6. Under one command. See how this all applies to the Church of the Saviour. All the children of God by faith, all heirs, all pilgrims, all of one covenant, one Saviour, &c.—essentially one; one in Christ Jesus. II. THE VARIOUS TRIBES. 1. Their different names. Necessary for distinction—recognition. 2. Their different positions in the camp. See next chapter. East side, ver. 3; south side, ver. 10; west, ver. 18; north, ver. 25. 3. The various tribes were in one general accord and union. All one religious confederacy, absolutely one, worship one, &c.; in perils one, in warfare one, in prospects one. III. THE SPECIAL DIRECTIONS TO THE DIFFERENT TRIBES. 1. Each tribe had their own standard or banner to distinguish it from the rest. No order without. 2. Each man was to be by his own standard. Not a wanderer; not a visitor to all; but his own fixed, legitimate position. 3. Thus the duties of every tribe would be regarded and fulfilled. 4. Thus the interests of all would be sustained. IV. SPIRITUAL LESSONS. 1. We see now the denominational tribes in the kingdom of Christ. Christians of different conditions, education, training, leaders, &c. 2. Christians have a special interest in their own camp. 3. To devote themselves to these is the first duty and privilege. Just as families are constituted, so churches. 4. All the various denominational camps constitute the one Church of the Saviour. Only one Israel, one body, one army, &c. For particular purposes, every man by his own camp; for general purposes, all acting in conjunction and harmony. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *The marshalling of the people*:—I. ORDER. 1. God Himself delights in order. 2. The importance of order is recognised in human affairs. 3. This order was probably divinely instituted as a means to peace and unity. II. VARIETY. Each camp had its own characteristic standard. And each tribe and each father's house had its own distinctive ensign. Monotony is not a mark of divinity. Variety characterises the works of God.

Countries differ in their climates, conformations, productions, &c. The features of landscapes differ. Trees, flowers, faces, minds differ. With one spirit there may be many forms. III. **UNITY.** All the tribes were gathered "about the tabernacle of the congregation," as around a common centre. They had different standards, but constituted one nation. 1. The dependence of all on God. All the tribes looked to Him for support, provision, protection, direction, &c. 2. The access of all to God. The tabernacle was the sign of the presence of God with them. 3. The reverence of all towards God. They were to pitch "over against the tabernacle." Probably the tribes were two thousand cubits from it. Cf. Josh. iii. 4. They were thus to encamp around the sacred place, that no stranger might draw near to it; and the Levites were to encamp near the tabernacle on every side, that the people themselves might not draw too near to it, but might be taught to regard it with respect and reverence. IV. **SECURITY.** The tabernacle of God in the midst of the camp was a guarantee of their safety. His presence in their midst would tend to—1. Quell their fears. He had wrought marvellous things on their behalf in the past: He was ever doing great things for them. Then why should they quail before any danger or enemy? 2. Inspire their confidence and courage. It should have given to them the assurance of victory in conflict, &c. (chap. x. 35, 36). Distance from God is weakness and peril to His Church. Nearness to Him is safety and power. Living in vital union with Him all-conquering might is ours. Conclusion—1. Learn sincerely and heartily to recognise as members of the Christian Israel all who have the Christian spirit, however widely they may differ from us in forms and opinions. 2. Think less of our isms and more of Christ's Church; less of theological and ecclesiastical systems, and more of Christ's gospel; less of human authority and patronage, and more of the Lord Jesus Christ. (*W. Jones.*) *Why God assigns to every tribe his place and order:*—The causes of this dealing of God toward His people are three: one in respect of Himself, another in respect of Israel, the third in regard of the enemies of them both, of God and His people. 1. The cause respecting God is, that they and all other might see what a wise God they serve. If they, professing the knowledge and service of the true God, had wandered up and down in the wild and waste wilderness, in such troops of men, in a confused manner, not knowing who should go before, nor regarding who should follow after, the name of God would have been dishonoured, His wisdom impaired, and His glory diminished. He leaveth them not to themselves, but assigneth to each tribe his proper mansion, to take away from them all confusion, and to cut off all matter of contention. For except He had established as by a law the order that should be observed among them, and thereby decided all questions that might arise touching priority, many hurly-buries and heart-burnings would be entertained, and part-takings would be nourished; which being kindled at the first as a little spark of fire, would afterwards break out into such a flame as would spread further, and in the end hardly be quenched. 2. They are mustered and marshalled into an exact and exquisite order, to dismay and terrify their enemies, as also to confirm and encourage their own hearts. Great is the force of unity, peace, and concord. One man serveth to strengthen and establish another, like many staves bound together in one. Many sticks or staves joined in one bundle are not easily broken; but sever them and pull them asunder, they are soon broken with little strength. Thus the case standeth in all societies, whether it be in the Church or Commonwealth, or in the private family. If our hearts be thoroughly united one to another, we need not fear what man can do unto us; but if we be at war between ourselves, we lie open to our enemies to work us indignity whatsoever. (*W. Attersoll.*) *God's delight in order:*—1. God is the God of order, not of confusion. As He hath order in Himself, so He commandeth and commendeth an order to be used of us. 2. All wise men will order their affairs with wisdom and discretion, and will dispose of them with seemliness and comeliness. An expert captain that goeth against his enemies will keep his soldiers in good array, whether he march or retire. If he fly out of the field out of order one is ready to overthrow another, and all are left to the mercy of his adversary. 3. The Church is not a confused multitude shuffled together, where no man knoweth his place or his office, and one encroacheth upon another; but it is the house of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth. Now in a house well ordered is to be seen the master as the ruler, and the family subject to his government, every one employing his proper gifts, and no man usurping the place and calling of another. If this be to be seen in our private houses, how much more must we conceive this of the Church of God, which is the house that He hath builded, the mountain of the Lord which He hath

prepared, and the peculiar people which He hath chosen? Uses: 1. Learn from hence to acknowledge an exquisite order in all God's words and works above and beneath, in heaven and on earth. 2. This reproveth such as know no order, but bring in all confusion and disorder in Church or commonwealth; these have nothing to do with God, but are the children of the devil, that hath transformed them into his image and likeness. For from whence are seditions and confusions but from our own lusts, enflamed and kindled from his furnace? 3. Seeing God requireth orderly observation of His ordinances, we learn this duty, that we must be careful to observe it and practise it with a due regard of His commandment. This is the general rule that the apostle commendeth unto us (1 Cor. 14). (*Ibid.*) *Divine appointments*: The camp of Judah was to set forth first, the camp of Reuben was to set forth in the second rank, the camp of Ephraim was to go forward in the third rank, the camp of Dan was to go hindmost with their standards. Judah first, Reuben second, Ephraim third; these terms are arithmetical and may be accepted without murmuring; but the next term is more than arithmetical—the camp of Dan “hindmost.” That seems to be a word of inferiority and of rebuke. Had the numbers been—first, second, third, fourth, the arithmetic would have been complete; but to be hindmost is to be further behind than to be merely fourth; it is to have the position marked so broadly as almost to amount to a brand of tribal degradation. Faith in the Divine appointment could alone secure religious contentment under such circumstances. This is as necessary to-day, in view of the distribution of men, with their various gifts and their endlessly varied vocations. What is the astronomical force that so whirls society around an invisible centre as to sink the mountains into plains and lift up the valleys to a common level? Order is but another word for purpose, or another word for mind. This mechanism was not self-invented or self-regulated; behind this military table of position and movement is the God of the whole universe. It requires the whole Trinity to sustain the tiny insect that trembles out its little life in the dying sunbeam; even that frail heart does not throb by having some small portion of the Divine energy detached to attend to its affairs. Dan was to go hindmost. The hindmost position has its advantages. It is a rule in the higher criticism that a critic on looking at a picture shall first look for its beauties. We ought, surely, to look so upon the picture of Providence, the map of human life, the marvellous academy of society. The greater the statesman, the greater the responsibility he has to sustain; the greater the genius, the more poignant its occasional agonies; the more sensitive the nature, the more is every wound felt, the more is every concussion regarded with fear. The foremost soldiers will be in battle first; we who are hindmost may have only to shout the hosanna of victory. This age is the hindmost in procession of time; is it therefore the inferior age? The nineteenth century comes after all the eighteen; but it therefore comes on the firmer ground, with the larger civilisation, with the ampler library, with the more extended resources; it comes with a thousand-handed ability because it is the hindmost of the days. Take this view of all circumstances, and life will become a joy where it has long been a pain; our very disqualifications in one direction may become qualifications in another. In the Old Testament and in the New Testament there was some regard to specialty of gift, to definiteness of position; having lost that regard we have lost power. You do not say the clock is an excellent time-keeper, but no use at all as a musical instrument. You do not take up a trumpet and say, a finer instrument was never made to call men to feast or to battle, but it is utterly useless if you want it to tell you the time of day. Every man in his own place, in his sphere. The great question is not in what regiment we are, but rather, are we in the army of Christ—whether with Judah first, with Reuben second, with Ephraim third, or with Dan the hindmost tribe? To be in the army is the great consideration. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Satisfied with one's own position*:—Many would do well to learn the lesson taught in an old parable. “I don't know,” said the turnstile one day, in a reflective mood, “I don't know that I ought to have thought so ill of my lot, and to have fretted over it as I have done. 'Tis true a turnstile has plenty of worry, as I have truly proved; worry and whirl all the day long! Nobody will ever pass without giving a turnstile a swing round; and whoever returns, ten to one but he gives the turnstile a whirling twist the other way! Indeed, I have said that I wouldn't wish to any one, whether friend or foe, the life of a poor turnstile. No. But then, as that old wheel of the waggon said yesterday, mine's a pleasant life and a favoured lot compared with his. If I have to turn round, he has the same; and whilst he has the burden of the cart, there is beside

the weight of the load it carries pressing on him, and I have no encumbrances. So, on the whole, perhaps I'd better try and be satisfied; that is, as satisfied as I can afford to be, with so many turns about as must in my situation naturally come to my lot." (*Biblical Museum.*) *The camp*:—1. The tents. They stand to-day; to-morrow sees the cords relaxed, the fastenings removed, and a vacant place. My soul, from Israel's tents you learn how fleeting is life's day! Press then the question, When I go hence, is an abiding mansion mine? 2. The order. Let Israel's camp be now more closely scanned. What perfect regularity appears! Rule draws each line. Our God delights in order. Is it not so in every Christian heart? When Jesus takes the throne, wise rule prevails. Disturbing lusts lie down. Is it not so in Christian life? There is no tangled labyrinth of plans—no misspent diligence—no toil without a purpose. 3. The position. All these tents share one grand privilege. They all have common focus. As the planets circle the sun, so these surround the sanctuary. God is the centre. They form the wide circumference. And from each door one sight—the holy tent—is visible. God in Christ Jesus is the centre, the heart, the life, the strength, the shield, the joy of His believing flock. 4. The standard. A standard floats above each tribe. Beneath the well-known sign they rest, and by its side they march. Believers have an ensign too. The banner over them is Jesu's love (Sol. Song ii. 4). The standard is a pledge of safety. Beneath it there is sweet repose. Beside it there is misery. (*Dean Law.*) *The most prominent banner*:—It is narrated that when, in the time of the Crusades, the lion-hearted Richard I. of England, the Emperor of Austria, and the King of France were jointly waging war against the valiant heathen, Saladin, a jealousy sprang up in the camp between England and Austria, and one morning the British banner was found lying in the dust on St. George's Mount—a distinguished point on which it had long waved—and the banner of Austria was planted in its stead; impetuous Richard, who was confined to his tent through severe illness, no sooner heard of it than he strode forth alone, and before the assembled hosts hurled Austria's ensign to the ground, and caused the lion once more to take the prominence, remarking, "Your banners may be arranged around mine, but must never take its place." So may it be in our preaching. Let the Lion of the tribe of Judah alone have the prominence. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *God the centre*:—For more than fifty centuries men watched the starlit sky, noted the changes of the planets, and endeavoured to discover the laws which governed their movements; they took careful observations, made elaborate calculations, and yet the law of the harmony of the heavens remained a mystery. The stars were still supposed to follow fantastic circles which no rule of science could explain: their orbits formed a labyrinth of which the most learned failed to find the clue. One day a man of genius said, "The sun, and not the earth, is the centre from which the worlds must be regarded." At once the harmony appeared; planets and their satellites moved in regular orbits; the system of the universe was revealed. God is the sun and the true centre of the spiritual world; only in the light in which He dwells can the destinies of man be truly read. (*Eugene Bersier.*) *Effectiveness of unity*:—Pliny writes of a stone in the island of Seyros, that if it be whole, though a large and heavy one, it swims above water, but being broken it sinks. So long as the Church keeps together nothing can sink it. "A thousand grains of powder, or a thousand barrels scattered, a grain in a place, and fired at intervals, would burn, it is true, but would produce no concussion. Placed together in effective position they would lift up a mountain and cast it into the sea. Even so the whole Church, filled with faith and the Holy Ghost, will remove every mountain and usher in the jubilee of the redemption." *Lessons from our national banner*:—When the Union Jack flies to the breeze the meaning is that what is under it is British property, and is a sort of challenge to touch that property. Every country had a flag. In old times very little did for a flag. One great nation had simply a wisp of straw on a pole, and another power in the East had but a blacksmith's apron. The Union Jack was their flag, and its composition was very simple. It was not made at all; like all the best things in this world, it grew. At first, in the thirteenth century, there was nothing but a single cross—one straight horizontal line and another perpendicular line. That was the cross of St. George, and it was introduced by Richard of the Lion-heart on his return from the Crusades. When away fighting in Palestine he came to know about St. George, whom he installed as his patron saint, took for his battle cry, and emblazoned on his flag. When England and Scotland were united under James I. of England, that monarch added the Scottish cross, and called the flag the Union Jack. That was

his own name, as he usually signed it in the French way, Jacques. Two centuries later the Irish flag was placed on the top of the other two. The Union Jack was thus made up of three crosses, each being laid on the top of the other as each country came into the Union. These were the emblems of St. George, St. Andrew, and St. Patrick—the patron saints of the three countries. First, there was St. George. “George” originally meant a cultivated piece of ground, and parents in thus christening their children meant to say, “Would that God would make this little boy a garden of God!” They could desire nothing better than to be gardens of God. They must be gardens—they must allow themselves to be sown in—and they had to be in their choice either to produce good or evil. Every good thought was a good seed. Now let us think a little about St. Andrew. There never was a live apostle in Scotland, but some one thought the bones of St. Andrew would do the Scots some good. So they were brought to St. Andrews, and that was the beginning of what was at one time the greatest city in Scotland. Andrew meant manly. Why was the object of the Brigade said to be the promotion of true manliness? Was it not as opposed to false manliness? Every one despised those who tried to be men before their time. Little was known about St. Patrick. He was carried away captive from Scotland to Ireland when a boy, and after obtaining his liberty he so pitied the people of Ireland that he went back to try and do them good. It was well for them to remember St. Patrick. Now, what did the flag teach them? It was a union—a Union Jack. It had been the strength of the British army all through, and it was owing to it that the English, Scotch, and Irish had fought side by side and helped one another. What they had to learn was the strength of union. The Cross led to victory. The Cross meant death to Christ, and the death of Christ meant that One came from heaven to die for them that they might be God’s children. Under which flag would they determine to serve? Under that of Christ, which led to happiness, or under that which assuredly would lead to misery and ruin? The greatest disgrace that could befall a man was the forsaking of his own flag to serve under another. To act thus was to be a traitor to his king. It was the worst thing possible not to yield themselves to Christ. Let them not try to serve Christ and some one else. Let them make up their minds and resolve that they would henceforth fight for what was good and do what was good. (*Prof. Marcus Dods, D.D., Sermon to Boys’ Brigade.*)

Vers. 3, 4. **The camp of Judah.**—*The encampment of Judah*:—I. **THE TRIBE.** “Judah” signifies praise. “Now will I praise the Lord,” said his mother Leah at his birth (Gen. xxix. 35). Thus is the spiritual Judah established and made a praise in the earth (Isa. lxii. 7), to the glory of God of whom it is born and made. This whole family in heaven and earth is named and appointed to be a continual praise to the glory of the omnipotent grace of Jehovah. Kings and priests as they all are, is not each “a brand plucked out of the fire”? (Zech. iii. 2). II. **THEIR ENCAMPMENT.** “Judah shall encamp.” But in what form and order? Upon this we have only to say, with respect to the spiritual Judah, that the mystical Cross of their great High Priest embodies itself in all their stations and movements, gives shape to all their hopes and expectations, directs and regulates their prayers, praises, and exertions. Whatever they attempt or whatever they enjoy is conformed to the Cross. III. **THE DIRECTION IN WHICH THE CAMP IS SITUATED.** Judah shall encamp toward the sun-rising. Such too is the cheerful situation of the beloved people; they have the evening behind them, and the morning in their eye. All are looking towards the rising day, towards the Day-star from on high. IV. **Judah’s encampment toward the sun-rising was to be with his banner.** Banners gave the signal for the people to march; they were planted upon hills and eminences, that they might be seen at a distance, and straightway the hosts marched towards and gathered round them. So it is with our banner of the Cross. It is a magnet of irresistible attraction. Wherever it is lifted up, there is a movement, an excitement, a stir, and the elect of God gather around it with exultation or with weeping. V. **JUDAH’S HOST.** How astonished should we be, what mingled terror and great joy would surprise us, if suddenly those covering angel-hosts, which encompass the spiritual Israel, were to burst the veil which renders them invisible to mortal eyes, and come forth at once into full view! Some in this world have been favoured to behold a portion of those invisible squadrons which always attend the children of God. Judah’s host is the heavenly band of “watchers,” who are sent forth to minister to the safety and welfare of those who shall be heirs of salvation. VI. **The name of Judah’s captain is NAHSHON, SON OF AMMINADAB.**

This name truly belongs to the Prince of the host, the Captain of our salvation. Nahshon signifies experience; and who is so experienced in conflict as He who was made perfect in sufferings, and having spoiled principalities and powers, overcame death, and opened to us the gate of everlasting life! Who is so experienced a captain as He, whose unslumbering pastoral care has been exercised for ages in behalf of His people! Who is so experienced in the tumult and alarm of war as He, against whom the infatuated and cold-hearted world have been bearing arms day and night for so many centuries! And who is so accustomed to triumph as He, who is making all such enemies His footstool and everywhere abides last upon the field! Appropriate therefore to Him is the name of Nahshon. He is also as truly in character "the son of Amminadab." For this name, which signifies "My people are a willing gift," directs our thoughts first to God the Father, as freely giving to Christ all who will ever come unto Him, and as making them also willing in the day of His power. (*F. W. Krummacher, D.D.*) *Aspects of honour:—*I. HONOUR WISELY CONFERRED. II. HONOUR IN RELATION WITH DUTY AND RESPONSIBILITY. III. HONOUR AS CONNECTED WITH PARENTAL INFLUENCE. IV. HONOUR AS RELATED TO FUTURE GREATNESS. Jacob had predicted that Judah should be the ruling tribe; he promised to Judah a kingdom and sovereignty. Ages more were to pass away before the prediction was fulfilled; but the honour now conferred on the tribe would encourage faith in its predicted destiny. Its natural tendency would be to stimulate them to—1. Believe in their destiny. 2. Work for their destiny. 3. Wait for their destiny. Let every privilege conferred upon us increase our assurance of the splendid honours which await us hereafter. (*W. Jones.*)

Ver. 17. The camp of the Levites in the midst.—*The Tabernacle in the midst of the host:—*I. THE REASONS FOR PLACING THE TABERNACLE AFTER THIS MANNER. 1. God doth hereby admonish them, that they should always have Him before their eyes, lest they should forget His worship or offend Him with their sins (comp. Lev. xxvi. 11, 12). 2. He had respect indifferently unto all the tribes. If any others had pitched their tents farther than from the Tabernacle, they would have quarrelled and complained that they had been contemned and despised. 3. The Levites were hereby put in mind of their duty, and therefore are lodged about it. II. THE USES OF PLACING THE TABERNACLE AFTER THIS MANNER. 1. It assureth us that God will ever be in the midst of us, and settle His rest and residence among us (comp. Lev. xxvi. 11, 12; Ezek. xxvii. 27). (1) God is joined unto us in the person of His own only Son Emmanuel—i.e., God with us. We are made members of His body (see Matt. xxviii. 20). (2) We have with Him the preaching of the gospel, whereby God is, as it were, brought down to reside and remain among us. (3) We have the promise of His presence and the seals thereof in His sacraments, whereby we are at one with Him, and He with us (see Gal. iii. 27; John vi. 54–56; 1 Cor. x. 16, 17). (4) When we come together in the Church to call upon His name He is near unto us, and most familiar with us (see Matt. xviii. 20). (5) He dwelleth among us whensoever He preserveth us from evil and delivereth us from our enemies. 2. It serveth to teach us to what end God hath instituted civil states and commonwealths in this world—to wit, to be stays and props to the Church, that the people of God may assemble together in peace and quietness. 3. It serveth to conclude the full and final happiness of the faithful, which is begun in this life, but shall be consummated in the end of this world. (*W. Attersoll.*)

Vers. 32–34. They pitched by their standards.—*Contentment and obedience:—*I. CONTENTMENT WITH THE DIVINE APPOINTMENT. 1. We are incompetent to determine our own place and duty. (1) Our ignorance. (a) Of ourselves; (b) of the future. (2) Our proneness to self-indulgence. 2. We have ample grounds for confidence in the determinations of God for us. (1) His knowledge. (2) His wisdom. (3) His kindness. II. OBEDIENCE TO THE DIVINE COMMANDS. 1. All God's commands are binding, because they are all right. 2. All God's commands are benevolent. Obedience is blessed as well as binding. (*W. Jones.*) *The two banners:—*We can easily guess how in days of ancient warfare the standard was of much practical use. When it moved forward, then the warriors took up sword and shield and also advanced. When it halted, then they prepared to encamp around the station of their own particular standard. The devices of these old flags suggested a kind of primitive heraldry, and they knew where at once to find their leaders, or to rally for the last desperate defence! As in thought we float along,

the stream of history, we recall the brazen eagles of Rome, clasping which the legionaries took that solemn oath of fidelity which taught to the soldiers of Jesus that word "Sacrament," which to us means so much! Then we may remember how the cloak of St. Martin became the standard of the Frankish host, or how the sacred banner of mediæval France was the renowned "Oriflamme." In England's history, too, we have the story of the great car which, surmounted by three flags, was the central point of the bloody "Battle of the Standard"; or we may sorrowfully think of that sad day when our country was torn asunder by internal strife, and the unfortunate Charles, king and martyr, raised his royal standard on a stormy day on the Castle Hill at Nottingham, and which was that very day blown down by the furious blasts—a sad and ominous beginning, which proved too truly prophetic. Lastly, there flashes across our memory that familiar story of Nelson ordering the flag of old England to be nailed to the mast, which has become a proverbial expression for pluck and resolution! But these legends of old times have for the Christian a lesson. There is a great conflict going on around us, a spiritual warfare of most real and eternal significance. Between the Church, which is the army of Christ, and the dark hosts of hell, the struggle seems daily to wax hotter and become more intense. The leaders on either side display their banners. "That of Satan," says an old writer, "is set up in the market-place of Babylon. It is inscribed with the alluring words, 'riches,' 'pleasures,' 'honours'; but these inscriptions are not to be trusted. Were they rightly inscribed they would assuredly bear instead, 'impiety,' 'idolatry,' 'impurity,' 'injustice,' and 'hatred against God.' But these true names he conceals with a dazzling magic, so that men are caught unawares by his false promises!" Under the standard of the Evil One are gathered together and assembled by him both evil spirits and bad men. These he sends forth throughout the whole world, that they should deceive and ruin the souls of men. To each of his adherents he gives a banner, a net, and chains. The flag that they may allure, the net that they may capture, the fetters that they may bind fast their captives. But see on yonder side. From that dark valley, up those steep slopes, there comes a mighty host. Many drop off, many fall back, but still they pour on upwards. The sunlight of heaven rests on their helmets, and before them comes borne aloft a mighty banner. It is the Standard of Jesus. Eighteen hundred years ago it was set up in the valley of humiliation at Jerusalem. Now He, the King of Humility, the Prince of Peace, is in the midst of His people, whose ranks He gazes on with loving eye. On His banner there is written, in letters of light and truth, the words, "repentance," "a Christian life," "paradise," "heaven!" Our Lord Jesus also sends His ministering servants throughout the world—angels, apostles, priests, and all who seek the saving of men's souls and the welfare of their bodies; bidding them teach the emptiness of earthly treasures, the true riches of penitence and faith; and that they should instruct all to persevere with patience till the golden gates are in view. The soldiers of Jesus advance, holding on high His banner, knocking at the door of all hearts, and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is nigh"; "Take My yoke upon you, and ye shall find rest." These invitations are given in various ways, and by different methods; sometimes by good thoughts infused by the Divine Spirit into the soul, sometimes by useful words and pious writings, sometimes by good examples. Through all these ways and channels the Saviour speaks to us. They who listen, they who obey, follow His standard. Thus, with many alternations, the great battle goes forward, with its separate host on either side and its two standards. Under which will you fight? (*J. W. Hardman, LL.D.*)

CHAPTER III.

VERS. 1-13. The priests which were anointed.—*Aaron and his sons: parents and children*.—In vers. 1-4 we have—I. AN INCIDENTAL ILLUSTRATION OF THE EXALTED PERSONAL CHARACTER AND THE DIVINE MISSION OF MOSES. II. AN INTIMATION THAT THE DUTIES OF THE MINISTERS OF RELIGION DEMAND FOR THEIR FAITHFUL DISCHARGE THEIR ENTIRE CONSECRATION THERETO. III. AN EXAMPLE OF WICKED SONS DESCENDING FROM A GODLY PARENT. IV. AN EXAMPLE OF THE WIDEST DIFFERENCE OF CHARACTER AND DESTINY IN CHILDREN OF THE SAME PARENTS. Our subject utters earnest counsels—1. To the children of godly parents. Trust not in the character and prayers of

your parents for salvation. These are of priceless value, yet they will not avail to your salvation apart from your own faith and obedience. (See Ezek. xviii.) 2. To parents. Be diligent and faithful in the discharge of your duty to your children. (1) Let your own life be right, and so set them a good example. (2) Give them wise religious instruction and training. (3) Commend them often and earnestly to God in prayer. (4) Afford them encouragement in every manifestation of pious feeling and conduct. (*W. Jones.*) *The dedication of the Levites—Church work and workers* :—Vers. 5–10. I. THE OFFICES OF THE CHURCH ARE DIVINELY INSTITUTED. II. THERE ARE DIFFERENT RANKS IN THE OFFICES OF THE CHURCH AS INSTITUTED BY GOD. III. THE LOWLIEST LABOUR IN THE SERVICE OF GOD IS SACRED AND BLESSED. IV. GOD ALSO APPOINTS THE PERSONS TO FILL THE VARIOUS OFFICES IN HIS CHURCH. V. INTRUSION INTO SACRED PLACES AND DUTIES AWAKENED THE STERN DISPLEASURE OF THE LORD. Conclusion : 1. Encouragement to those who are called of God to Christian work. He who has called you to your work will sustain you in it, make it efficient by His blessing, and confer upon you rich rewards. 2. Admonition as to our estimate of the ministers of the Lord. They “are ambassadors for Christ.” God Himself speaks through them to men. (*Ibid.*) *God’s claim upon man’s service* :—From vers. 11–13, we learn—I. GOD’S CLAIMS UPON MAN’S SERVICE ARE INCONTESTABLE. Upon what are they grounded? 1. Upon what He is in Himself. 2. Upon what He does for man. II. THERE IS A CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE GIFTS AND THE CLAIMS OF GOD. His demands are proportioned to His bestowments. 1. This is righteous. 2. This is beneficent. III. THE DIVINE ARRANGEMENTS ARE EVER MARKED BY INFINITE WISDOM AND KINDNESS. (*Ibid.*) *The measure of the Divine demands upon man* :—I. GOD GAVE THE BEST HE HAD TO EFFECT OUR SALVATION. II. THE SON GAVE HIMSELF. Let us sacrifice ourselves to God as He sacrificed His Son for us. 1. Thus only can we attain to a high ideal in religion. Be the best possible Christian : be not content with mediocrity : aim high. 2. This is the best way to be useful. The power of Christianity is in the fact of Christ giving Himself. Our influence for good is in proportion to our self-sacrifice. 3. This is the way to enjoy religion. The more we give of self to God, the more will He give of Himself to us. Let all think of what God has done for them, and consider what returns they have made to Him. (*David Lloyd.*) *The necessity of a standing ministry* :—We see in this place, how Moses immediately after the numbering of the people, that meddled not with the ministry of the word, or killing of the sacrifices, or serving in the tabernacle, or carrying of the ark, or teaching of the people, handleth in the next place the fashion of the ministry. For let there be never so great order or good policy in the commonwealth, yet if the care of the ministry be neglected, all is to little purpose. We see from hence the goodly order that God observeth in this great army. He establisheth among them most carefully the holy ministry to the end they might be instructed in the Word. Hereby we learn that among all nations and people under the heavens, the ministry of the Word ought to be planted and established, to guide them in the ways of godliness. 1. A certain and settled ministry is an evident token that God hath a church and a people to be begotten by the immortal seed of the Word. 2. Without the light of the Word the people remain in darkness and cannot see : they grope at noonday, and know not what they do—as it was in Egypt when the plague of palpable darkness was sent among them (*Exod. x. 23*). 3. The necessity of a ministry is so evident that all the Gentiles had their priests and prophets that attended on their profane and superstitious altars, and it was their first care to establish a religion, such as it was, among them. If it were thus among them who saw darkly, and were without the true light of the Scripture, much more ought we to learn it, that have been taught better things, and have the sure word of the prophets to guide us. 4. Such is our frailty, that notwithstanding we live under a settled ministry, and have given our names to the faith, yet we are ready to start back again. For as the body is prone to pine away without supply of daily food, so are our souls ready to perish, being destitute of the heavenly manna of the Word of God. Uses : 1. There is offered unto us this truth arising from the doctrine itself, that the preaching of the Word by the minister, and the hearing of it by the people, is no ceremony nor a matter of indifference, such as may either be done or left undone at our own discretion, but it is such a part of the public service of God as ought not to be neglected without great sin. 2. It serveth to reprove divers abuses. (1) Such as think and spare not to say that the ministry is a vain and superfluous thing, and that the ministers are men that may very well be spared, as if they were a sixth finger upon the hand, or a sixth toe

upon the foot; that is bringing a burden rather than a benefit. For as they account the Sabbath the loss of one day in a week, so they account the maintenance of the ministry the loss of their goods. These have learned another language than the tongue of Canaan. They do not the works that besem Christians, and they cannot speak as besemeth those that profess the fear of God, if so be they do profess so much. Is it a needless thing to have the light of the sun in the firmament, without which all things are covered with darkness, and nothing can have life and quickening? But the sun is not more necessary to be in the world than the light of the Word in the Church to give life and light unto them that sit in darkness (Matt. iv. 16). Is it needless to have labourers to reap down our corn in time of harvest? To have meat brought unto us and provided for us when we are hungry, or drink when we are thirsty? (2) The vain conceit of their hearts, who having learned the principles of religion and some grounds of knowledge, proceed no further, as if they had no more use of the Word, whereas there is matter of instruction always to be learned out of the Word for all persons. When we have eaten one kind of meat one day, we eat the next day as hungrily of it as we did before. (3) They that extol to the skies the kingdoms and commonwealths of the heathen as the only prosperous, flourishing, and happy nations, which indeed excelled in outward glory and thereby dazzled the eyes of many, yet indeed were no better than assemblies of men destitute of religion, and consequently of salvation. Their peace and prosperity, their wealth and dignity, were all carnal and momentary, rising out of the earth, and sinking down into the earth again; their praise also is of men. It is the maintenance of true religion that maketh a people truly happy, and the means of spreading abroad true religion is the ministry of the Word. There is no way to know it and to practise it but by this. 3. Must the ministry be established among all people under heaven? Then let every one of us be careful for our parts to plant it among us, and to bring it home to the places of our abode. 4. Let the ministers be careful to discharge their calling, and to teach the people in season and out of season. They must be lights of the world, and as savoury salt to season them with wholesome doctrine. 5. Let the people carefully attend to the ministry of the Word, where it is settled and planted, with a good conscience, as to God's holy ordinance vouchsafed unto them. Let them bring attention in hearing, diligence in marking, and obedience in practising. Let them not use any delays to shift off the performance of this duty. (*W. Attersoll.*) *Consecrated lives*:—In the artist's studio a fleck of paint lies upon the palette. It is so much colour and nothing more; till, taken up by the brush of the master and laid upon the canvas, it becomes a rosy flush on beauty's cheek, or a lustrous cloud in a golden sunset. So has many a mean and common life been touched by the Master's hand to higher uses; so has many an humble believer been caught up from the poverty of his earthly lot to be a glorious spirit before the throne of the "Eternal Light." *Vocation is in a line with fitness*:—If we agree that the Christian ministry is a vocation for the teaching, in various forms, of Christian righteousness, the question next comes, What is meant by a "call" to it? Is this anything different from that inward impulse to a specific form of work which arises in a man from a consciousness of special gifts in that direction? In that sense a man may be said to be called to the work of a musician or artist. The parents of Mozart, when they found their son, at the age of seven, playing before the crowned heads of Europe, need have been in no doubt as to his life work. It was revealed in his gifts more plainly than it could have been by a voice from heaven. And when, on the other hand, Mozart's own son, once asked whether he loved music, replied by flinging down some coins on the table and exclaiming, "That's the only music I care for," it was equally evident that whatever he came into the world to do, it was not to follow in the steps of his father. Vocation here undoubtedly is in a line with fitness. The tools are for him who can use them. (*Christian World.*) *God improves the life given to Him in service*:—It is said of vapours, that rising out of the earth, the heavens return them again in pure water, much clearer, and more refined than they received them; or as it is said of the earth, that receiving the sea-water and puddle-water, it gives it better than it received it in the springs and fountains, for it strains the water and purifies it, that whereas when it came into the bowels of the earth it was muddy, salt, and brinish, it returns pure, clear, and fresh, as out of the well-head waters are well known to come. Thus, if men would but give up their heart's desire, and the strength of their affections unto God, He would not only give them back again, but withal much better than when He received them, their affections should be more pure, their thoughts and all the faculties of soul and body should be

renewed, cleansed, beautified, and put into a far better condition than formerly they were. (*J. Spencer.*)

Vers. 15-22. **From a month old.**—*Dedication of infants to God*.:—That He taketh them from a month old is a thing of good use, and we may note it, for it notably sheweth that we may destinate our children to God before they be fit for any other course of life. In the Gospel, those parents that brought little children to Christ are chronicled up for an eternal praise of them, and for an example to all parents to the end of the world. Matthew calleth them “little children.” Luke calleth them “babes,” even such as yet hanged upon the breast, effectually noting how soon we should bring them to Christ. Satan’s envy even against these babes to be brought to Christ appeareth there, and our Saviour’s unspeakable good against that malice, commanding them to be brought unto Him, and not to be hindered, taking them in His arms, putting His hands upon them, blessing them, and graciously affirming, that “of such is the kingdom of God.” A natural parent wishes all good to his child, and as he is able, procureth it, even as the root spreadeth his sap to the branches without grudge or exception; and a religious parent, above all worldly good, careth for God’s holy fear to be planted in his child. For the effecting whereof soon he bringeth him unto Christ, knowing that the first liquor put into a vessel is of great force ever in the same. Alas, what will the whole world profit them, were we able to give it them, if eternally they be damned—yea, they and we both, they for not knowing Christ, and we for not bringing them to Christ. Wherefore earnest is that commandment of the Holy Ghost, “Fathers, bring up your children in instruction and information of the Lord.” Abraham is registered up for this care; and whilst this Book of God remaineth it will be found written to their praise that Timothy’s grandmother and mother brought him up in the knowledge of the Scripture from a child. Honour may shine and glory may glitter, but how soon covered with a cloud. Beauty much wished, but permanent with neither wishes nor wisdom whatsoever. Only the good gotten by bringing children to Christ remaineth for ever in his reward. And therefore let religious parents have a care of it, even soon, soon, remembering this place, that the Levites, appointed for His service, He would have numbered from a month old. (*Bp. Bubington.*) *Church membership of children*.:—What, then, is this infant membership? What conception can we take of it which will justify its Christian dignity? A great many persons who are very sharp at this kind of criticism appear to have never observed that creatures existing under conditions of growth allow no such terms of classification as those do which are dead and have no growth; such, for example, as stones, metals, and earths. They are certain that gold is not iron, and iron is not silver, and they suppose that they can class the growing and transitional creatures, that are separated by no absolute lines, in the same manner. They talk of colts and horses, lambs and sheep, and it possibly not once occurs to them that they can never tell when the colt becomes a horse, or the lamb a sheep; and that about the most definite thing they can say, when pressed with that question, is that the colt is potentially a horse, the lamb a sheep, even from the first, having in itself this definite futurity; and, therefore, that while horses and sheep are not all to be classed as colts and lambs, all colts and lambs may be classed as horses and sheep. And just so children are all men and women; and if there is the law of futurity in them to justify it, may be fitly classed as believing men and women. And all the sharp arguments that go to cover their membership as such in the Church with absurdity, or to turn it into derision, are just such arguments as the inventors could raise with equal point to ridicule the horsehood and sheephood of the young animals just referred to. The propriety of this membership does not lie in what those infants can or cannot believe, or do or do not believe, at some given time, as, for example, on the day of their baptism; but it lies in the covenant of promise, which makes their parents parents in the Lord; their nurture a nurture of the Lord, and so constitutes a force of futurity by which they are to grow up imperceptibly into “faithfuls among faithfuls,” in Christ Jesus. . . . The conception, then, of this membership is, that it is potentially a real one; that it stands, for the present, in the faith of the parents and the promise which is to them and to their children, and that on this ground they may well enough be accounted believers, just as they are accounted potentially men and women. Then, as they come forward into maturity, it is to be assumed that they will come forward into faith, being grown in the nurture of faith, and will claim for themselves the membership into which they were before inserted. Nor is this a case which has

no analogies that it should be held up as a mark of derision. It is generally supposed that our common law has some basis of common sense. And yet this body of law makes every infant child a citizen; requiring, as a point of public order, the whole constabulary and even military force of the state to come to the rescue or the redress of his wrongs, when his person is seized or property invaded by conspiracy. This infant child can sue and be sued; for the Court of Chancery will appoint him a guardian, whose acts shall be the child's acts; and it shall be as if he were answerable for his own education, dress, board, entertainments, and the damages done by his servants, precisely as if he were a man acting in his own cause. Doubtless it may sound very absurdly to call him a citizen. What can he do as a citizen? He cannot vote or bear arms; he does not even know what these things mean, and yet he is a citizen. In one view he votes, bears arms, legislates, even in his cradle; for the potentiality is in him, and the state takes him up in her arms, as it were, to own him as her citizen. (*H. Bushnell, D.D.*)

Vers. 33-39. These shall pitch on the side of the tabernacle.—*The placing of the Levites throughout the host*:—In this division we see more particularly that which was in part noted before, namely, the several situations that these Levites had about the tabernacle, which they compassed round about that they might not be far from any of the people of God, but always resident among them. This teacheth us that God will have every part of His people taught. None are too high in regard of their great places; none are too low in regard of their obscure callings; none are too good to be taught, whatsoever their degrees be. This will be made plain by divers reasons. 1. Consider the titles that are given unto God in the Scriptures. He is worthily called the King of His Church, and the Lord and Master of His house. Is not He “the Shepherd of Israel that leadeth Joseph like sheep”? (*Psa. lxxx.* 1). Will a shepherd that hath any care of his sheep, or any love unto them, look unto some of them and not to all? Will a king regard only the chief cities and most populous places of his kingdom, and suffer the rest to live as they list, without laws and good orders? Or will the master of a house look to some in his family, and not to all? 2. Such is the grace and goodness of God, that He would have all His people come to knowledge. Such as know not His will are none of His servants. If then He require the understanding of His ways, not only of rich men, of great men, of learned men, and of the ministers, but of all the people, we must hereof conclude that He hath ordained that all of them should have the means of knowledge and salvation offered unto them, and published among them. 3. The Word of God was penned for all estates, degrees, and conditions of men. 4. All persons, whatsoever they be, have souls to save; simple persons, small congregations, little assemblies, as well as others that are many in number. Uses: 1. It is God's ordinance that every congregation should have a learned minister to teach them the true religion and fear of God. 2. It is required of the ministers of the Gospel, whom the Holy Ghost hath made overseers of their several flocks, to look to their whole charge from one corner of it to another. They are to give an account for every soul that dies through their ignorance or through their negligence. 3. We have warrant from hence to desire most earnestly that the kingdom of God may flourish everywhere. Christ our Saviour teaches us to pray that His kingdom may come (*Matt. vi. 10*), and so to be erected in the hearts of men. 4. This doctrine serveth as an instruction to all magistrates (as their places serve them) to further the preaching of the Word, and to furnish such places as belong unto them with able teachers. (*W. Attersoll.*)

CHAPTER IV.

VER. 16. The office of Eleazar.—*The Eleazar priesthood*:—There are few chapters which will so amply repay patient study as this. It might be styled the directory for the pilgrim priest, and therefore it is of great importance to us who wish to retain our priestly purity in the midst of the wilderness of this earthly life. The first verse tells us that it is addressed to Moses the lawgiver, and to Aaron the priest. We therefore at once expect to find here a linking of duties and privileges. If you want to know what was the great duty of the pilgrim priest, it was to carry

the tabernacle throughout the wilderness, so that wherever the children of Israel pitched they might have a meeting-place where they might commune with God. And so this great work in which we are engaged may be summed up in these words, To carry Christ with us throughout this wilderness; and as the Levite's motto might be, To me to live is the tabernacle : so to me to live is Christ, to carry Christ where'er I go. Some of us may be entrusted with what the world considers the more important service—with the holy vessels; others may have the heavier burden, or the little vexatious duties, but they are all for this great purpose, that the children of Israel may constantly hold communion with their God. Nay, mark you, more: not only does the great High Priest appoint each of us to service and burdens—both passive burdens and active service—but in the case of Merari there was to be a special inventory of everything entrusted to their care, so that they might not consider for one single moment that their part of the work was of less importance. The 16th verse brings before us not so much the responsibility as the privilege. To the office of Eleazar the priest pertain these four things—the oil for the light, the sweet incense, the daily meat-offering, and the anointing oil. As Christian men and women, are they not, spiritually speaking, just the four things you need now in your daily life? 1. The first is this: "To the office of Eleazar the priest pertaineth oil for light." We recognise that God has made us the lights of the world. He bids us shine forth to the glory of God. He has given to us that high dignity. But, alas! too often our lights are going out; they do not shine as brightly as they ought. It seems as though we were hiding our light under the bushel of business or the bed of sloth, instead of putting it on a candlestick that it might give light to others. Call to your Eleazar Priest; ask Him to give of His oil; ask Him to take away sin, and to give you the oil of His Holy Spirit, for it is to the office of Eleazar the priest that pertaineth the oil for the light. 2. The second thing pertaining to his office was the sweet incense. You remember the use of the sweet incense. Whilst the children of Israel were praying in the outer court, the priest went into the holy place, and took with him the incense, laid it upon the altar, and, as the prayers ascended from the people outside, the incense ascended from the priest inside. Now, have you not oftentimes felt the necessity of that sweet incense? O Thou Eleazar Priest, do Thou purify my prayers with Thine own sweet incense, so that God may listen to my cry, and forgive the evil of my prayer: purge out the unclean selfishness of my prayer, that it may ascend up to my Father in heaven. Thank God, to His office it pertains to provide that sweet incense. You have not to provide the incense. 3. Thirdly, to his office pertaineth the daily meat-offering. You remember what that was. Every morning the children of Israel were obliged to bring a lamb for the burnt-offering, and the same every evening; but as soon as the lamb was offered upon the altar, the daily meat-offering had to be added representing the pure and spotless character of Christ. Now, in the same way, you and I have to bring the daily burnt-offering to God. Every morning you ought to say: Here I present myself to Thee, O God, to be a holy, living sacrifice unto Thee, which is but my reasonable service. Every day you ought to bring your daily burnt-offering, and put it upon the altar, and then, when you have thus dedicated yourself to God, and consecrated yourself to His service, have you not often felt—I come and offer myself to God, but what a poor offering it is! And when I consecrate myself upon the altar, how I need that which shall make my burnt-offering acceptable to God! And morning by morning God accepts you in the Beloved—not for what you are in yourself, but for what He is. What can I do for God, I am so weak and feeble? If I put myself upon God's altar, can He use me for His service? Yes, He can; because to the office of Eleazar the priest pertaineth the meat-offering, and He will make acceptable your burnt-offering. 4. One thing more: I have prayed Him to give me oil for the light. I have come to Him, and I have acknowledged that even in my prayers there is a good deal of self that cannot be acceptable to God except perfumed by the merits of my Saviour; and although I have put myself upon the altar to be used as He will, I recognise that in myself dwelleth no good thing, that I want the daily meat-offering to atone for my burnt-offering. Now, what do I want? I want power—power to serve God: I want that my life may be an influence for good. I want to be a man full of power, by the Spirit of God. To the office of Eleazar the priest pertaineth the anointing with oil, and that oil goes down to the very skirts of his garments, even to the very humblest believer. I heard only yesterday of a young girl in a house of business, only sixteen years of age, whose confirmation time was a time of grand decision for God. She went back to that house of business, where

the principals were practically atheists; but I was told yesterday that that young girl, whose life had been anointed with the holy anointing oil, had such power in that business that the principal and his wife have both been converted. The principal is now a lay preacher in the Church of England, and the lady of the business holds a large Bible-class for those in houses of business; one of them traces back the blessing to the quiet, holy influence of that little girl, the power of the Holy One resting upon her. Oh, that I might thus be filled with power, have the anointing oil upon me. Is not that what you want in the midst of this wilderness journey, in the midst of all the trials and temptations of daily life? (*E. A. Stuart, M.A.*)

Vers. 34-49. **They were numbered . . . every one according to his service.**—*Proportion between number and service*:—Looking at the relation of the numbers to the service required of them we discover illustrations of—I. **THE WISDOM OF GOD.** “By this diversity of numbers among the Levite families,” saith Trapp, “God showeth His wisdom in fitting men for the work whereunto He hath appointed them, whether it requireth multitude or gifts” (1 Cor. xii. 8-12). Every one hath his own share; all are not alike gifted.” II. **THE REASONABLENESS OF THE DIVINE REQUIREMENTS.** “Though the sum total of effective Levites,” says Greenfield, “was very small compared with that of the other tribes: yet they would be far more than could be employed at once in this service. But they might carry by turns and ease one another, and thus do the whole expeditiously and cheerfully. They would also have their own tents to remove, and their own families to take care of.” There was an ample number for the performance of the work; and its distribution amongst so many would render it comparatively easy to every one. God’s claims upon us and our service are in the highest degree reasonable. He is a kind and gracious Master. III. **THE EXEMPLARY OBEDIENCE OF THE SERVANTS OF THE LORD.** (*W. Jones.*) *Many in the Church who do not add to its service*:—Observe—1. That the Kohathites were in all eight thousand and six hundred, from a month old and upward: but of those there were but two thousand seven hundred and fifty serviceable men, not a third part. The Gershonites in all seven thousand and five hundred: and of them but two thousand six hundred and thirty serviceable men, little more than a third part. Note—Of the many that add to the numbers of the Church, there are comparatively but few that contribute to the service of it. So it has been, and so it is; many have a place in the tabernacle, that do but little of the work of the tabernacle (Philip. ii. 20, 21). 2. That the Merarites were but six thousand and two hundred in all; and yet of these there were three thousand and two hundred serviceable men, which were a good deal above half. The greatest burden lay upon that family, the boards, and pillars, and sockets. And God so ordered it, that though they were the fewest in number, yet they should have the most able men among them; for whatever service God calls men to, He will furnish them for it, and give strength in proportion to the work, grace sufficient. 3. The whole number of the able men of the tribe of Levi, which entered into God’s host to war His warfare, was but eight thousand five hundred and eighty; whereas the able men of the other tribes that entered into the host of Israel to war their warfare were many more. The least of the tribes had almost four times as many able men as the Levites, and some of them more than eight times as many. For those that are engaged in the service of this world, and war after the flesh, are many more than those that are devoted to the service of God, and fight the good fight of faith. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*) *The numbered people*:—I. Here is **AUTHORITY FOR THE MUSTER-ROLL**—“According to the commandment of the Lord they were numbered.” It was not left to Moses to number the people without Divine sanction, else the deed might have been as evil in the sight of the Lord as that of David when he made a census of the nation: neither may any man at this day summon the saints of the Lord at his own discretion to enterprises for which they were never set apart. The armies of Israel are none of ours to lead whither we will, nor even to reckon up that the number may be told to our own honour. 1. Believers in Christ Jesus, you are now called forth to do suit and service, because like the tribe of Levi you are the Lord’s. He views you as the church of the firstborn, as the redeemed from among men, and as His peculiar inheritance, and therefore above all other men you are under His special rule and governance. 2. You are further called because this is a charge laid upon you of the Lord, to whom you specially belong. The Levites were not numbered with the rest of the nation, for their vocation was altogether different, and their whole business was “about holy things.”

Ye see in this your calling, for hereunto are ye also ordained that ye may live unto the Lord alone. 3. The Lord may well call you to this service, seeing He has given you to His Son, even as He gave the Levites to Aaron, as it is written (chap. iii. 9), "They are wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel." Because ye belong to Christ, therefore hide not yourselves from His service, but come forward with alacrity. 4. The Lord has constituted you the servants of all His people, even as He said of the Levites that they were to "do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation." We are debtors to all our brethren, and we are their servants to the full extent of our power. II. NOTICE THE APPOINTMENT OF THE INDIVIDUALS—"Every one according to his service, and according to his burden." By our varied gifts, positions, offices, and opportunities, we are as much set apart to special services as were the sons of Kohath, &c. Great evils arise out of persons mistaking their calling, and undertaking things of which they are not capable; and, on the other hand, the success of Christian work in a large measure arises out of places of usefulness being filled by the right men. III. OUR TEXT is the summary of the chapter in which we have an ACCOUNT OF THE ACTUAL FULFILMENT OF THE LORD'S COMMAND BY MOSES. He numbered each family, and cast up the total of the tribe, at the same time mentioning in detail the peculiar service of each. We would imitate him at this important moment, and take the census of those who are consecrated to the Lord's own service. 1. Where are you, then, who can bear the heavier service of the sanctuary, carrying its pillars, and the boards, and the sockets thereof? You are now needed to speak in the meetings, to lead the people in prayer, to order the assemblies, and to take the heavier work of this holy business. The Lord Jesus should have able men to speak for Him; He deserves the best of the best. Now is the hour, where is the man? Let no diffidence or love of ease keep one back who might make known the gospel and win a soul for Jesus. 2. But where are you who can only carry the pins and the cords? Your burden is lighter, but probably your strength is also less, and lighter though your load may be, the matters which you carry are quite as essential as the pillars and the boards. Where are you? You who can say a few words to lonely inquiring ones; you who can do no more than pray, where are you? At your posts, or idling? Answer quickly, for time and need are pressing. If the load which you can carry be so very small, be all the more ready to bear it. 3. Are you a lover of the Lord Jesus and do you wish to be omitted from the roll-call? If so, let it be known to yourself, and stated plainly to your conscience. Do not pretend to be a labourer and remain a loiterer, but openly avow to your own soul that you stand all the day idle, and feel fully justified in so doing. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *All have a work to do for God*:—There is a work for all of us. And there is special work for each, work which I cannot do in a crowd, or as one of a mass, but as one man, acting singly, according to my own gifts, and under a sense of my personal responsibility. There is, no doubt, associated work for me to do; I must do my work as part of the world's great whole, or as a member of some body. But I have a special work to do, as one individual who, by God's plan and appointment, has a separate position, separate responsibilities, and a separate work; if I do not do it, it must be left undone. No one of my fellows can do that special work for me which I have come into the world to do; he may do a higher work, a greater work, but he cannot do my work. I cannot hand my work over to him, any more than I can hand over my responsibilities or my gifts. Nor can I delegate my work to an association of men, however well-ordered and powerful. They have their own work to do, and it may be a very noble one. But they cannot do my work for me. I must do it with these hands or with these lips which God has given me. I may do little or I may do much. That matters not. It must be my own work, and by doing my own work, poor as it may seem to some, I shall better fulfil God's end in making me what I am, and more truly glorify His name, than if I were either going out of my own sphere to do the work of another, or calling in another into my sphere to do my proper work for me. (*John Ruskin.*) *Happiness of working for God*:—The Rev. Andrew Fuller, the eminent Baptist minister, was depressed at one time by his people living in a low state of mind; they did nothing but sigh and groan. All his endeavours were fruitless to raise them to a higher spiritual life. Much perplexed, he made inquiry into their actions, and found that they were doing nothing for Christ. He at once set them to work, and a marked change took place; instead of sighs, groans, and gloomy faces, there were cheerfulness and faces glowing with happiness. If your state of heart and mind is low and depressed, carry the story of the life, death, and resurrection of the Saviour to some perishing

soul; do something for the Master, and soon your heart will leap with joy and gratitude. *Unfaithful helpers are a burden*:—An overworked minister, whilst lamenting the lack of workers in his church, dozed, and, as the story goes, dreamed. He thought he was between the shafts of a four-wheeled coach, and four of his helpers were each pushing a wheel, and up the hill they all toiled together. Soon he felt the coach drag heavily, and at last he could pull no further so came to a standstill. On looking behind he discovered that his four helpers had quietly got inside to ride. How much happier and easier Christian work would be if all would do their best. (*Young Men's Review*.) *Power running to waste*:—We are told sometimes of the vast power unutilised as the waters leap over the Falls of Niagara; in fact, statisticians have given us calculations of the marvellous saving of steam, which means coal, which means money, that might thus be saved. We are not sure but that it has been proved that there is power enough, if it could be communicated, to give electric light to the whole continent, and no one who has walked along the banks of the Niagara River for two or three miles above the Falls, and studied the tremendous force of the current, will hesitate to doubt such statements. Is there not in this a parable? There is a whole Niagara of Christian power running to waste in our land—power that if utilised would flash the light of salvation over the world, and bring in the perfect day of Christ's kingdom on earth. Take any of our churches, what are a large portion of the members doing? Absolutely nothing—they are in their places on the Sabbath, and just possibly at the weekly prayer-meeting; beyond that what? But, "I can do so little." Oh, my friend, put your little and a thousand littles of your brethren together, and it would make a power that by the grace of God would be irresistible. Niagara is but the united power of a thousand streams far, far away. (*Canadian Independent*.)

CHAPTER V.

VERS. 2, 3. Put out of the camp every leper, and every one that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead.—Where God dwells there must be purity:—I. GOD HIMSELF IS PURE, AND CANNOT ASSOCIATE WITH THE IMPURE. If discipline is lax, God departs. It is not the large church, or the intelligent or the wealthy one, that attracts Him, but the pure one. As the lightning passes by the polished marble and the carved wood to touch the iron or steel, because there it finds something akin to itself, so God passes by those to dwell with the pure, because in them He finds a character akin to His own. II. GOD WILL NOT, BECAUSE HE CANNOT, DO ANY GOOD TO THE IMPURE. Any one tolerating sin would not appreciate the design of God and accept His blessing; and where He cannot bless, He will not come to dwell. Let us then "put out of the camp every leper," everything that defileth; for the presence of God in our midst is of the utmost importance to us as His Church and people. His presence is essential. 1. To our comfort as Churches and Christians. What the shining sun is in nature His presence is with us—our brightness, our joy, &c. 2. To our prosperity. God with His Church has been in all ages the secret of its power and success. His presence is the life of the ministry and of all Christian work (*D. Lloyd*.) *The exclusion of the unclean*:—I. AS A SANITARY MEASURE. 1. The universal application of the rule. 2. The sacred reason by which it was enforced. Impurity separates from God. II. AS A SPIRITUAL PARABLE. 1. Sin is a defiling thing. 2. Sin is a deadly thing. 3. Sin is a separating thing. Where sin is cherished God will not dwell. (1) The openly and persistently wicked should be expelled from the Church on earth. (a) Because of their corrupt influence (1 Cor. v. 6-13). (b) Because of the dishonour to God which their presence in the Church involves. (2) The wicked will be excluded from the city of God above. Conclusion: 1. He who demands this purity has provided the means whereby we may attain unto it. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." 2. Let us diligently use the means which He has provided. "Wash you, make you clean," &c. (*W. Jones*.) In the midst whereof I dwell.—God ever present with His people:—This teaches us that God is evermore present with His people. This appeareth in the example of Joseph (Gen. xxxix. 21, 23). I will propound a few reasons. 1. He will save those that are His. His presence is not

a vain presence, neither is He an idle beholder of things that are done; but His presence is to prosper and to save (Jer. xxx. 11). We must not therefore dream of a presence that effecteth nothing, but rather willetth His people oftentimes to stand still, while He worketh all in all. 2. They have good success in their lawful labours, so that He maketh the works of their hands prosperous. Uses: 1. For the increase of a sound faith in God. He leaveth them not to themselves; He withdraweth not His strength from them; He delivereth them not to the lust and pleasure of their enemies. This is it which He telleth Joshua after the death of Moses (Judges i. 5). 2. This teacheth us this good duty, that we take heed we do not defile ourselves with the pollutions of sin. For how shall we dare to commit sin that is so highly displeasing in His sight, forasmuch as He is with us to behold us and all our actions? (*W. Attersoll.*) *God dwelling with His people*:—I. GOD IS PRESENT WITH HIS PEOPLE. 1. Influentially (Psa. cxxxix. 1, 10). 2. Sympathetically (Gen. xxviii. 16, 17; John xiv. 16–26; 1 John i. 3). II. GOD IS PRESENT IN THE MIDST OF HIS PEOPLE. 1. As to the centre of union. 2. As the source of blessing. Life, light, power, beauty, &c. III. GOD'S PRESENCE IN THE MIDST OF HIS PEOPLE SHOULD EXERT A GREAT AND BLESSED INFLUENCE UPON THEM. 1. A restraint from sin. 2. An incentive to holiness. 3. An encouragement to duty. 4. An assurance of support in the toils and trials of life. 5. An assurance of victory in the conflicts of life. 6. An assurance of perfect salvation. (*W. Jones.*) *The presence of God among His people demands holiness on their part*:—Redemption was the basis of God's dwelling in the midst of His people. But we must remember that discipline was essential to His continuance amongst them. He could not dwell where evil was deliberately sanctioned. It may, however, be said, in reply, "Does not God the Holy Ghost dwell in the individual believer, and yet there is much evil in him?" True, the Holy Ghost dwells in the believer, on the ground of accomplished redemption. He is there, not as the sanction of what is of nature, but as the seal of what is of Christ; and His presence and fellowship are enjoyed just in proportion as the evil in us is habitually judged. So also in reference to the assembly. No doubt, there is evil there—evil in each individual member, and therefore evil in the body corporate. But it must be judged; and, if judged, it is not allowed to act, it is rendered null. We are not to judge motives, but we are to judge ways. The very moment a man enters the assembly, he takes his place in that sphere where discipline is exercised upon everything contrary to the holiness of the One who dwells there. And let not the reader suppose, for a moment, that the unity of the body is touched when the discipline of the house is maintained. We frequently hear it said of those who rightly seek to maintain the discipline of the house of God, that they are rending the body of Christ. There could hardly be a greater mistake. The fact is, the former is our bounden duty; the latter, an utter impossibility. The discipline of God's house must be carried out; but the unity of Christ's body can never be dissolved. And why, we may ask, was this separation demanded? Was it to uphold the reputation or respectability of the people? Nothing of the sort. What then? "That they defile not their camps in the midst whereof I dwell." And so is it now. We do not judge and put away bad doctrine, in order to maintain our orthodoxy; neither do we judge and put away moral evil, in order to maintain our reputation and respectability. The only ground of judgment and putting away is this, "Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever." God dwells in the midst of His people. (*C. H. Mackintosh.*) *No Church ought to tolerate open offenders*:—No Church ought to tolerate any filthy livers, or unclean persons, or notorious offenders among them (Deut. xxiii. 17; 1 Cor. v. 1, 2; Eph. v. 3–5). This truth may be further strengthened by many reasons. 1. For it is a comely thing for the saints of God to do so: that as they differ from heathen men, so they may differ from heathen meetings. Moses teacheth that they ought to put out evil from them, because they are an holy people (Deut. xxiii. 14). 2. For the neglect of this duty, the wrath of God falleth upon the sons of men. He is the God of order, and requireth that all things in the Church be done in order. Hence it is that the apostle saith (Col. iii. 6). And we have sundry examples of this in the people of Israel, who were diversely destroyed because of their sins (1 Cor. x. 5). 3. We showed before that they were as unclean beasts, and should not be admitted to the fellowship of Christ's sheep which are clean, lest they defile them through their contagion, and tread down with their feet the residue of their pastures. The apostle saith (1 Cor. v. 6). Sin therefore being infectious, the sinner is not to be tolerated in the assembly of the righteous. Uses: 1. It should minister great matter of much sorrow to every society of Christian men and women, when any of

the congregation grow to be thus profane and defiled with the contagion of sin. Is it not a great grief to have any one member of the body cut off? This the apostle teacheth (1 Cor. v. 2.) 2. It is a cause of great mercy and of a wonderful blessing from God, when such as transgress are resisted and punished. So long as sin is suffered, God is offended, and His wrath is extended over those places and persons. He hath a controversy against those that sin against Him. 3. Every congregation is bound to purge their own body from such excrements and filthiness as annoy it. We must have herein true zeal and godly courage in the cause of God and His truth. We must not stand in fear of the faces of men, though they be never so great and mighty. The censures of the Church must not be like the spider's web, which catcheth flies and gnats, whereas the bigger creatures break from it. This reproveth such as dare not deal with great men, rich men, and mighty men: they are afraid to touch them lest they purchase their displeasure. 4. Is no Church to tolerate any open offenders among them? Then they must use the censure of excommunication as an ordinance of God, not an invention of men; and not only know the nature and use of it, but practise it to the glory of God, and to the good of others. This is it which our Saviour Christ hath left and commanded to be executed among us (Matt. xviii. 17). (*W. Attersoll.*)

Vers. 6-10. **Recompense his trespass.**—*The law as to fraud*:—1. He must confess his sin, and crave pardon from the bottom of his heart; he must submit himself unto God, knowing that he can by no means hide his sin, nor by any colour keep it from the sight of God. 2. We must make satisfaction to Him whom we have wronged. It is not enough to make open confession unto God, unless also we make actual restitution unto men. This is done to discourage injurious persons. For if they should only restore the principal, they know, if their offences were found out, they should be no losers. 3. He must seek reconciliation and atonement with God, by offering up of a ram in sacrifice, which figured out the suffering of Christ, and offering up of Himself once upon the Cross, for the discharge of our sin, and appeasing of the wrath of His Father. It shall profit us nothing to be at peace with men, except we be at peace with our God. This the enacting of the Law: an exception is annexed by way of prevention. For the offender that hath trespassed against his neighbour might object and say, How can I restore that I have taken? It may be the party is dead; it may be he hath neither son nor daughter nor kinsman: may I not then lawfully conceal it, and justly retain it unto myself? I answer, nay; the Lord answereth, Thou shalt by no means detain the goods that are not thine own, if thou look for any good at My hand. If the owner be dead or unknown, and he have none of his kindred and alliance living to be his heir, it shall not be thine, it is the Lord's, and He giveth it unto the priest for a recompense of his labours in the tabernacle. God is the Lord of the soil; He challengeth it at His own, and He disposeth it at His own pleasure. (*Ibid.*) *Fraud and forgiveness*:—I. THE SIN OF FRAUD. 1. As assuming many forms. (1) Fraud in the matter of goods entrusted to the keeping of another. (2) In business transactions. (3) In seizing by force that which belongs to another. (4) In wronging another by means of deceit. (5) In the finder of lost property injuring the loser by falsehood. And in our own age fraud assumes many forms, and is widely prevalent. The employer who does not pay just wages to those in his service is guilty of it (Prov. xxii. 16; Isa. iii. 14, 15; Col. iv. 1; Isa. v. 4). So also is the servant or workman who squanders the time for which his employer pays him; in so doing he defrauds his employer. The trader who takes an unfair advantage of his customer, which he calls by some special name, e.g., "practice of the trade," &c.; the broker or speculator or manager who induces persons to invest their money in unreliable enterprises; the person who contracts a debt without the sincere intention and reasonable prospect of paying it—all these, and others, are guilty of fraud. 2. As a wrong done to God. II. THE CONDITIONS OF ITS FORGIVENESS. 1. Consciousness of guilt. "The expression, 'that person be guilty,' does not merely refer to his actual criminality; but to his consciousness of guilt respecting it: for this case must be distinguished from that of a person detected in dishonesty which he attempted to conceal." Without the consciousness of guilt the other conditions of forgiveness could not be truly complied with. 2. Confession. "Then they shall confess their sin which they have done." This is an essential condition of forgiveness (Psa. xxxii. 5; Prov. xxviii. 13; 1 John i. 9). In itself it relieves the burdened soul, and leads to the joy and peace of forgiveness. 3. Restitution is essential to remission of sin;

for where restitution is not made it is evident that sincere repentance is absent (Ezek. xviii. 7, 9, 12, 13, xxxiii. 15). 4. Sacrifice. In addition to making restitution the offender was commanded to offer "the ram of the atonement, whereby an atonement shall be made for him." Conclusion : 1. Let those who have injured others make speedy and full confession and restitution. 2. Let us all cultivate the most thorough integrity and uprightness in our whole life and conduct. (*W. Jones.*) *Restitution* :—When Mr. Moody was once speaking upon prayer, an incident occurred illustrating his subject, which made a profound impression, and came home to every one. He said true prayer consisted of ten elements—Adoration, Confession, Restitution, Thanksgiving, Unity, or Brotherly Love, the Spirit of Forgiveness, Faith, Ask (with a beggar's importunity, a servant's docility, and a friend's confidence), Perseverance, and last, Submission. When he came to the third element, Restitution, a man rose in the audience and cried out : "Mr. Moody, let me cut in here. I went to Texas five years ago, having cheated my creditors of 15,000 dollars. My wife and I thought we were real smart. We settled in one of the cities, bought a nice house and furnished it tip top; grand piano, Brussels carpets, and my wife thought no end of the lace curtains. But we had hardly got settled down when Mr. Moody came along, and, like others, we followed the crowd of 'professors' and church members. He preached the same sermon we have so far heard to-night. The Spirit of God convicted me and my wife both of sin, on this head of Restitution, and we went home perfectly miserable. I said, 'Loo, what are we to do?' 'Do!' says she; 'you know what to do without asking me; repay everybody to the last cent.' No sooner said than done; the house was sold and an auction called right away; and, oh, the joy I had in handing up the silver-ware and the china. The piano and all went, but my wife was so happy at parting with the lace curtains it was really curious. Then we took two little rooms, a bedroom and a kitchen, and the only table we had was the one we had used in the kitchen for chopping meat on; but the Lord filled us with Himself, and we had peace and joy, because we had pardon and a clean conscience. The dear Lord has blessed me far above my desert and beyond what the devil led me to steal, and we have come to Northfield to praise the Lord, and carry back with us to Texas a fresh baptism of the blessed power which set us free five years ago."

Vers. 11-31. If any man's wife go aside.—*The trial of the suspected wife* :—I. CONFIDENCE IN CONJUGAL RELATIONS IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE. "Suspicion," says Bp. Babington, "is the cut-throat and poison of all love and friendship." And in proportion to the intensity of the love will be the anguish of suspicion in respect to the object of the love. II. ADULTERY IS A SIN OF THE GREATEST ENORMITY. This dreadful ordeal, which was intended to prevent it, shows how great was its heinousness in the Divine estimation. This is expressed—1. In the abasement of the suspected woman. The "barley meal," of which the offering was composed, the "earthen vessel" which contained the water, and "the dust" that was put into the water, indicate a state of deep humiliation and disgrace. The absence from the offering of oil, the symbol of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, and of frankincense, the symbol of prayer, also proclaimed her questionable repute and the suspicion with which she was regarded. In like manner the "uncovering of the woman's head" was indicative of the loss of woman's best ornament, chastity and fidelity in the marriage relation. 2. In the terrible punishment which came upon the guilty. This ordeal was made so terrible that the dread of it might effectually prevent the wives in Israel from the least violation of their fidelity to their husbands. It remains as an impressive proclamation of the utter abhorrence with which God regards the sin of adultery. It is a sin against God; it inflicts the most intolerable injury upon the husband; it is an unmitigated blight upon the family; and it is a wrong to society generally. The most terrible condemnations are pronounced upon it in the Sacred Word (Lev. xx. 10; Mal. iii. 5; 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10; Heb. xiii. 4). III. THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN IS CLOSELY RELATED TO THE SIN ITSELF. The punishment came in those portions of her body which she had abused. IV. GOD WILL BRING TO LIGHT THE SECRET SINS OF MEN. If the suspected woman were guilty, after this ordeal her guilt would be made manifest. All sins are known unto Him. V. GOD WILL ASSUREDLY VINDICATE THE INNOCENT WHO HAVE SUFFERED FROM SUSPICION AND SLANDER. In this case the vindication was most complete. "If the woman be not defiled, but be clean; then she shall be free, and shall conceive seed." "If not guilty after such a trial," says Adam Clarke, "she had great honour; and, according to the rabbins, became strong, healthy, and fruitful;

for if she was before barren, she now began to bear children; if before she had only daughters, she now began to have sons; if before she had hard travail, she now had easy; in a word, she was blessed in her body, her soul, and her substance." Thus to the innocent there was no terror in this stern ordeal. It was rather a blessing to them, if by any means they had come to be regarded with suspicion by their husbands; for by means of it such suspicions would be removed, and their fidelity and honour vindicated and exalted. And God will, sooner or later, splendidly vindicate all who suffer from misrepresentation, slander, or false accusation. (*W. Jones.*) *Innocence mysteriously declared*:—Aunt C. Fox told us of an American friend who once felt a concern to go somewhere, he knew not where. He ordered his gig, his servant asking where he was to drive. "Up and down the road," said his master. At last they met a funeral. "Follow this funeral," said the master. They followed in the procession till they came to the churchyard. Whilst the service was being performed the friend sat in his gig; at its conclusion he walked to the grave, and said solemnly, "The person now buried is innocent of the crime laid to her charge." An elderly gentleman in deep mourning came up to him in great agitation, and said, "Sir, what you have said has surprised me very much." "I can't help it, I can't help it," replied the other; "I only said what I was obliged to say." "Well," said the mourner, "the person just buried is my wife, who for some years has lain under the suspicion of infidelity to me. No one else knew of it, and on her death-bed she again protested her innocence, and said that if I would not believe her then, a witness to it would be raised up even at her grave-side." (*Caroline's Fox's Journal.*) *Innocence strangely declared*:—It is recorded in history that a beautiful maiden, named Blanche, the serf of an ancient nobleman, was wooed by her master's son. Not admiring his character, she scorned his suit. Upon this, his course of love turned to bitter hatred. Just then a precious string of pearls confided to the maiden's care was lost. Her pseudo-lover charged her with the theft, and, in accordance with the customs of that rude age, she was doomed to die. On the day of the execution, as the innocent girl knelt to offer her dying prayer, a flash of lightning struck a statue of Justice, which adorned the market-place, to the dust. From a scattered bird's nest, built in a crevice of the image, dropped the lost pearls—thus declaring her innocence. In a moment the exultant crowd rushed to the scaffold, demanding her release. There she knelt beside the block, pale and beautiful, and with a smile of peace upon her lips. They spoke—she answered not. They touched her—she was dead! To preserve her memory, they raised a statue there; and to this day, when men gaze upon her image, they condemn her oppressor; they praise her for the purity of her character; they recognise the justice of Him whose lightnings testified to her innocence. (*W. Smith.*) *A fallacious test of innocence*:—Man frequently satisfies himself that he has come to an accurate conclusion merely because, on the application of what he considers an infallible test, he discovers a particular anticipated result. Often enough the test is utterly fallacious. Take an example. The tanghin, or tanguen, is the only plant of its genus, and is confined to Madagascar. Its poisonous seed is esteemed by the natives an infallible criterion of guilt or innocence. After being pounded, a small piece is swallowed by the supposed criminal. If he be cursed with a strong stomach, which retains the poison, he speedily dies, and is held guilty; if his feeble digestion rejects it, he necessarily escapes, and his innocence is considered proven. Now it is obvious to any educated mind that innocence and guilt are in no way disclosed by this process. Yet inasmuch as it has been accepted as a test, its results are unquestioned. And there are numberless instances in which English society consents to be governed by the results of tests, simply because those tests are generally accepted. Again and again it becomes important to inquire whether, supposing your test does disclose a given result, that test is really as infallible as you deem it to be? Many will be found to be only "tanghin" tests, and as such utterly fallacious. (*Scientific Illustrations.*)

CHAPTER VI.

VERS. 1-21. **A vow of a Nazarite.**—*The law of vows (with special reference to the Nazarite).*—1. The principle of the vow is that God has placed earth's good things

at man's disposal; and it is a becoming thing in him to give so much of it back to God (1 Chron. xxix. 14, 16; Jonah i. 16). But once made, there was no option in the performance of the vow. *No vow* was better than a *vow unpaid* (Deut. xxiii. 21, 22; Eccles. v. 4-6). 2. The subjects of vows were endless as a man's possessions. They extended even to the person of himself or others over whom he might have control (Lev. xxvii). 3. But the vow at once most prominent in the Old Testament, and coming nearest to the personal consecration asked for in the New, is that of the Nazarite. The Nazaritish vow is explainable neither on the one hand as stoicism, nor on the other as a mystic representation of the Divine power working in man. It represents the ideal of sacrifice, in the devotement of a man's own person to God. I. THE MARKS OF DEDICATION LAID UPON THE NAZARITE. 1. He is to abstain from all alcoholic liquor; and, to avoid danger or suspicion, must abstain from all that comes from the vine (chap. vi. 3, 4). As a similar regulation was made regarding the priests when in God's service (Lev. x. 9), the inference is that indulgence in strong drink specially unfits a man for God's presence or indwelling. 2. He is to leave his hair unshorn (chap. vi. 5), obviously as a badge of his position. The meaning of the Nazarite's long hair, *i.e.* his subjection to God, gives meaning to the woman's long hair (1 Cor. xi. 10), viz. her subjection to man. 3. He must not come into contact with the dead (chap. vi. 7). The lesson lay in the close connection between death and sin, and carried the promise of victory over death to him who sought the victory over sin. II. THE EXAMPLES PRESENTED IN SCRIPTURE OF THE NAZARITE VOW. The vow was generally taken for a short period—from thirty to sixty days—and probably its very commonness prevents its being much noticed in Scripture. But there are some notable examples of Nazarites for life. Samson was, in the full sense of the word, a life-Nazarite (Judges xiii.). In the case of Samuel (1 Sam. i. 11), no mention is made of abstinence, and in the case of John Baptist (Luke i. 15) no mention is made of the hair; but it is probable that they were both full Nazarites. III. ITS APPLICATION TO OURSELVES. 1. In Bible times it was a permissible and honourable thing to abstain from intoxicating drinks. When God had any specially great or holy work for a man to do, He would have him a Nazarite or an abstainer (Lev. x. 9, &c.). He classes the Nazarite with the prophet (Amos ii. 11). Have we any less reason to-day to be abstainers than these men had? 2. The Nazaritish vow raises the question of our entire consecration to God. Christ was not an abstainer because He is the one perfect example of consecration, and representative of the body which shall yet stand in its completed freedom before God. There will be no vows in heaven, because at every moment the heart's choice will be all that it should be. But if we put vows from us now, we have to ask, Is it because we are above them, or because we are below them? (W. Roberts, M.A.) The ordinance of Nazariteship:—1. The fruit of the vine, in every shape and form, was to him a forbidden thing. Now, wine, as we know, is the apt symbol of earthly joy—the expression of that social enjoyment which the human heart is so fully capable of entering into. From this the Nazarite in the wilderness was sedulously to keep himself. It is a very grave question indeed how far we, as Christians, are really entering into the meaning and power of this intense separation from all the excitement of nature and from all merely earthly joy. It may perhaps be said, "What harm is there in having a little amusement or recreation? Has not God given us richly all things to enjoy? And while we are in the world, is it not right that we should enjoy it?" We reply, it is not a question of the harm of this, that, or the other. There was no harm, as a general rule, in wine, nothing abstractedly wrong in the vine tree. The question for us is this, Do we aim at being Nazarites? Do we sigh after thorough separation and devotement of ourselves, in body, soul, and spirit, unto God? If so, we must be apart from all these things in which mere nature finds its enjoyment. 2. But there was another thing which marked the Nazarite. He was not to shave his head. In 1 Cor. xi. 14, we learn that it argues a lack of dignity for a man to have long hair. From this we learn that if we really desire to live a life of separation to God, we must be prepared to surrender our dignity in nature. Now here is just the very thing which we so little like to do. We naturally stand up for our dignity and seek to maintain our rights. It is deemed manly so to do. But the perfect Man never did so; and if we aim at being Nazarites we shall not do so either. We must surrender the dignities of nature, and forego the joys of earth, if we would tread a path of thorough separation to God in this world. By and by both will be in place; but not now. This simplifies the matter amazingly. It answers a thousand questions and solves a thousand difficulties. It is of little use to split

hairs about the harm of this or that particular thing. The question is, What is our real purpose and object? Do we merely want to get on as men, or do we long to live as true Nazarites? 3. The Nazarite was not to touch a dead body (vers. 6, 7). When once the consecration of God rested upon the head of any one, that important fact became the touchstone of all morality. It placed the individual on entirely new ground, and rendered it imperative upon him to look at everything from a peculiar point of view. He was no longer to ask what became him as a man; but what became him as a Nazarite. 4. We behold, in the person of the Nazarite, a type of one who sets out in some special path of devotedness or consecration to Christ. The power of continuance in this path consists in secret communion with God; so that if the communion be interrupted, the power is gone. (C. H. Mackintosh.)

Nazarite rules:—1. No juice of grape, no produce of the vine, may touch the consecrated lips. This principle is broad and deep. Flee whatever may tend to weaken the firm energy, or to stir up the sleeping brood of sensual and ungodly lusts. More than gross vice is branded here. Evils may enter in a pigmy form. At first they may seem harmless. Avoid them. They are the cancer's touch. They are the weed's first seed. 2. No razor approaches the Nazarite's hair. His flowing locks openly announce his separate state. The dedication must not be a secret act, known only to the conscience and the Lord. Religion is not for the closet or the knees alone. It is not a lily, growing only in the shade. It is to be the one attire in which you move abroad—the holy crown which sparkles on your brow. 3. He must avoid all contact with the dead. Among the living he must live. Wherefore is death to be thus shunned? It is the penalty of sin—the sign of God's most righteous wrath. It is a proof of innocence destroyed—of evil touched—of vengeance merited. It is abomination's colleague. Therefore it is emblem of what holy men should holily abhor. (Dean Law.)

The Nazarite:—It is to be noticed here that this separation was voluntary and in full accordance with the self-determination of the will power. The Nazarite, of his own choice, vowed a vow that for a certain time at least he would be all the Lord's. This indicated his conscious choice. He could make the vow, or he could decline to do so. In all his dealings with men, God recognises and honours their will power. No one is coerced into His service. No one is over-constrained to set himself apart for God. And so it is with Christian holiness—the New Testament idea of Nazaritism. Men must first of all, by the Spirit of God, will to be all the Lord's. They must will to give up themselves, the world, and sin, and every wrong thing, and to be separated to God for ever. Those Nazarites to God were among the brightest shining lights of the Jewish dispensation. And is it not so now? The more complete the consecration and separation the more blessed and wide-spread and Divine is the light which shines out from this holy character. But there were certain conditions of Nazariteship then, as there are now. First of all, the Nazarite was to be a total abstainer. No man who gives himself up to the wine-cup can be wholly separated to God. There must be a separation from these things. As men draw consciously near to God there will be an abandonment of intoxicants. 2. Their hair was to remain uncut (ver. 5). In the olden time the growth of the hair was thought to be indicative of strength. The idea may have originated in many minds from the strength in Samson's unshorn locks. But, whatever the cause, this has very generally been thought to be the case. This was done, we think, that it might be clearly indicated that nothing was to emasculate or effeminate the persons thus set apart. The person who would be all the Lord's must give up everything which would mar or enfeeble his religious character or life. It has been thought by some that long hair is a token of subjection. So Paul is regarded as teaching in 1 Cor. xi. 5. Well, let it be so. And then what does this indicate to the spiritually-minded person? Why, surely, that the Christian Nazarite is entirely under subjection to God. 3. All who saw these persons knew that they were Nazarites. Their unshorn locks told at once their real character. In like manner the holy Christian will readily impress the mind of those by whom he is surrounded that he belongs to Christ. 4. Furthermore, he was not to touch any dead body, not even of those who were dearest to him. No one who aims to be a holy Christian should fail to keep his "garments unspotted from the world." 5. The Christian Nazarite's vow is for life. With him, this consecration is not merely for eight days, or for a month, or a year; but it is for life. (Lewis R. Dunn, D.D.)

The vow of the Nazarite; or, acceptable consecration to God:—Acceptable personal consecration to God is characterised by—1. Voluntariness. The service of the slave, or of the hireling, He rejects. 2. Completeness. Divided allegiance is

no allegiance. 3. Subordination of sensual enjoyments. Our animal passions must be controlled by moral principles. Everything which tends to weaken our soul's vision, to blunt our susceptibility to spiritual impressions, to interrupt our communion with God, or to deprive us of spiritual purity and power, we are bound to abstain from. 4. Separation from all moral evil. (*W. Jones.*) *Of the vows of the Nazarites, and the use thereof to us:*—The Nazarites were such persons as vowed a special kind of holiness. The parts of their special holiness are two: first, while they were in this vow; secondly, when the days of it were accomplished. This is the vow and these are the rites belonging unto it: now let us observe the uses remaining for us. For albeit these ceremonies be all abrogated, yet we shall find great benefit to arise from hence to the whole Church. 1. And first concerning the sanctification of these Nazarites professing holiness above others, it was a lively figure of Christ, signifying to the whole Church the wonderful purity of Christ, who was fully and perfectly separate from sinners. But was Christ such a Nazarite as these here spoken of? I answer, no: He observed no part of this vow. The Nazarites abstained from wine, the fruit of the vine, the blood of the grape: but Christ Himself in His own person did not so. Howbeit He is indeed a true Nazarite, or rather the truth of the Nazarites, separate from all the corruptions that attend upon the rest of the sons of men, free from the common defilements of the world; and that holy One which is called the Son of God. This is a great comfort for us to consider the excellency of His sacrifice, being without blemish, for it was most requisite that the unspeakable work of the Spirit should come in, that so He might not be tainted with the common infection of original sin, but might be endued with most perfect purity and innocency, and so be fully able to cover our impurity and impiety (Ephes. v. 26, 27), and withal as by a certain pledge assure us, that in the end all our sins and imperfections shall be done away. In Him is that fulfilled therefore which is spoken in the Lamentations, that He was whiter than the milk, and purer than the snow, and it agreeth more fitly and truly unto Him than unto these Nazarites. 2. Secondly this teacheth that such as were special ornaments of the Church, and have received a more eminent office than others, should also labour to shine before others in holiness of life, according to the measure of grace which they have received (Rom. xvi. 7). These thus advanced of God are, in the eyes of the world, as a city set upon a hill; a little blemish is soon seen in their face, a small stain appeareth in their coat; and therefore Satan laboureth especially to tempt and seduce them. And Christ telleth His disciples that Satan desired to winnow them—they I say above others as their calling was above others; for they were the master-builders, and laid the foundation of the Church, upon which others builded. Let all those therefore whose place and calling and gifts make them evident above others, take heed to themselves: let them labour to cleave more closely to God, and so to let their light shine before men that they, seeing their good works, may glorify their Father which is in heaven. These are as chief captains of the host, and the ensign-bearers of the Church, to show the way to others and to go in and out before them in an unblamable course; and though they draw not all unto them by their example, yet their fervency, their earnestness, shall serve to instruct many others. 3. Thirdly, seeing these Nazarites must keep themselves from wine and strong drink, as also from eating fresh or dried grapes, so long as the days of their separation endured, we learn hereby that it is our duty to fly from all evil, even all the occasions and allurements of sin whatsoever, though they be never so pleasant to the eye or sweet to the taste; inasmuch as we shall find them in the end to be more sharp than vinegar, more bitter than wormwood, more deadly than poison. (*W. Attersoll.*) *Dangerous things to be avoided:*—As much as we can, let us keep ourselves from slippery places, for even on dry ground it is not very strongly that we stand. (*J. Spencer.*) *Degrading effects of drink:*—A minister of the gospel told me in 1847 one of the most thrilling incidents I ever heard in my life. A member of his congregation came home for the first time in his life intoxicated, and his boy met him on the doorstep, clapping his hands and exclaiming, "Papa has come home!" He seized that boy by the shoulder, swung him around, staggered, and fell with him in the hall. The minister said to me, "I spent that night in that house. I went to the door, and bared my brow that the night air might fall upon it and cool it; I walked up and down the hall. There was his child dead; there was his wife in strong convulsions, and he asleep. A man but thirty-five years of age asleep with a dead child in the house, having a blue mark upon the temple where the corner of the marble steps had come in contact with the head as he swung him round, and a wife upon the very brink of the grave! I felt I must

remain until he awoke, and I did. When he awoke he passed his hand over his face, and exclaimed, 'What is the matter? Where am I? Where is my boy?' 'You cannot see him.'—'Where is my boy?' he inquired. 'You cannot see him.'—'Stand out of my way. I will see my boy!' To prevent confusion, I took him to that child's bed-side, and, as I turned down the sheet and showed him the corpse, he uttered the shriek, 'Ah, my child!' One year afterwards that man was brought from a lunatic asylum to lie side by side with his wife in one grave, and I attended his funeral." The minister of the gospel who told me that fact is to-day a drunken oster in a stable in Boston! Now tell me what drink will do. It will debase, degrade, imbrute, and damn everything that is noble, bright, glorious, and godlike in a human being. (*J. B. Gough.*) *A faithful abstainer*.—The Rev. Canon Wilberforce was once in the neighbourhood of the London Docks, in a little room as black as a chimney, but, through the preaching of the gospel, many souls have been born there. He asked if any one would get up and say what God had done for their souls. An old sailor rose and said how bad he had been; felt that he was even a devil's castaway; but six years ago, in that little room, he was led to see that he was a great sinner, but that Christ was a great Saviour, and that on the cross was nailed every one of his sins. "I signed the pledge and threw away my pipe, and have been upheld by God, because every morning I pray that I may be protected." Returning recently from Hong Kong, this old sailor had an accident and was badly scalded, and was very ill. When he began to recover the doctor said, "You must take some port-wine." "No," said the old sailor, "I am a teetotaler." "But," said the doctor, "you need it to strengthen you." "Doctor," said the old man, "do you think I shall die if I don't take the wine?" "Yes," said the doctor. "Then," said the sailor, "when you get into the St. Katherine's Docks, go round to the little room and tell them that the old man died sober." But he did not die, and is alive to this hour to testify of the sufficiency of God's grace to keep him.

Vers. 23-26. On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel.—*The threefold blessing*.—1. Open the hand wide. The Father comes to fill it. "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee." (1) When? Now and ever, when you go out, come in, sit down, rise up, through all your living space, and when the last breath flutters on your lips. (2) Where? In every place in which you tarry, or to which you move; in the closet, at the domestic board, at home, abroad, in still retreat, and in the busiest haunts, in the publicity of open work, and in the sanctity of holiest spots. (3) How? By causing all things to minister to your true good, by crowning your lot with all real happiness. 2. Jesus comes next. "The Lord make His face shine upon thee," &c. The greatest change on nature's brow is when light dawns. Gloom dwells beneath the pall of night. It is so with the soul. Sad are the hours which are not bright with Jesus. Then sins affright, and wrath dismays, and all the future is despair. This blessing promises the shining of His face, not a brief ray, but the full blaze of concentrated love. "The Lord make His face shine upon thee." Here, too, a precious pearl is added. It is grace. The words proceed, "and be gracious unto thee." What wonders are wrapt up in grace! Its birth is in the heavens, its fruit upon the earth. It looks on those in whom no merit dwells. 3. The blessing voice still speaks. "The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee," &c. Can they who have received so much need more? But more is wondrously given. The truly blest have all the blessings of a Triune Jehovah. Hence the Spirit's favour is moreover pledged. Seek Christ, abide in Him, make Him your all, then will this threefold blessing be your crown. (*Dean Law.*) *The priestly blessing*.—I. THE DIVINE DIRECTION. The command to pronounce the blessing may be regarded as an assurance that, when it was pronounced, the blessing itself would be given. II. THE DIVINE BENEDICTION. 1. The significant form of the benediction. (1) The triple use of the sacred Name is significant. (2) The use of the singular number in reference to the subject of the blessing is significant. 2. The Divine fulness of the benediction. "As the threefold repetition of a word or sentence serves to express the thought as strongly as possible (*cf. Jer. vii. 4, xxii. 29*), the triple blessing expressed in the most unconditional manner the thought that God would bestow upon His congregation the whole fulness of the blessing enfolded in His Divine Being which was manifested as Jehovah." The blessing includes—(1) The preservation of God. "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee." Danger is implied. We are weak, inexperienced, prone to sin, exposed to temptation. What subtlety can surprise God who is infinite in intelligence? What strength can stand against Omnipotence?

(2) The favour of God. "The Lord make His face shine," &c. When the Divine face is dark with frowns, distress and death ensue; when it is bright with favours, life and joy flow to man. "They perish at the rebuke of Thy countenance." "Cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved." There seems to be an allusion to the shining of the sun. It gives life, light, heat, beauty, power, joy. (3) The peace of God. "The Lord lift up His countenance," &c. "Shalom"—peace, "the sum of all the good which God sets, prepares, or establishes for His people." "Peace, including all that good which goes to make up a complete happiness." This great blessing is viewed as flowing from the gracious regard of God for man. Pardou, preservation, peace, an unspeakable wealth of blessing flows to man from the sovereign favour of our gracious God. III. THE DIVINE RATIFICATION. "And they shall put My name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them." The benediction was not to be the mere utterance of a pious wish; but God would give effect to it. "A Divine blessing goes along with Divine institutions, and puts virtue and efficacy into them." God will certainly bless His own ordinances unto all those who believe. (*W. Jones.*) *The priestly blessing*:—I. The priests, among other good offices they were to do, are APPOINTED SOLEMNLY TO BLESS THE PEOPLE IN THE NAME OF THE LORD. Hereby God put an honour upon the priest, for the less is blessed of the better; and hereby He gave great comfort and satisfaction to the people, who looked upon the priest as God's mouth to them. Though the priest of himself could do no more but beg a blessing, yet being an intercessor by office, and doing that in His name who commands the blessing, the prayer carried with it a promise, and he pronounced it as one having authority, with his hands lifted up and his face towards the people. 1. This was a type of Christ's errand into the world, which was to bless us (Acts iii. 26) as the High Priest of our profession. The last thing He did on earth was with uplifted hands to bless His disciples (Luke xxiv. 50, 51). Bishop Pearson observes it as a tradition of the Jews, that the priests blessed the people only at the close of the morning sacrifice, not of the evening sacrifice, to show that in the days of the Messiah, which are (as it were) the evening of the world, the benediction of the law should cease, and the blessing of Christ should take place. 2. It was a pattern to gospel-ministers, the masters of assemblies, who are in like manner to dismiss their solemn assemblies with a blessing. The same that are God's mouth to His people to teach and command them, are His mouth likewise to bless them; and they that receive the law shall receive the blessing. II. A FORM OF BLESSING IS HERE PRESCRIBED THEM. In other of their devotions no form is prescribed; but this being God's command of the blessing, that it might not look like anything of their own He puts the very words into their mouths (vers. 24-26). Where observe—1. That the blessing is commanded upon each particular person: "The Lord bless thee." They must each of them rely on themselves to receive the blessing, and then they should find enough in it to make them every man happy (Deut. xxviii. 3). If we take the law to ourselves, we may take the blessing to ourselves, as if our names were inserted. 2. That the name Jehovah is three times repeated in it, and (as the critics observe) each with a different accent in the original. The Jews themselves think there is some mystery. And we know what it is, the New Testament having explained it (2 Cor. xiii. 14). 3. That the favour of God is all in all in this blessing, for that it is the fountain of all good. (1) "The Lord bless thee." Our blessing God is only our speaking well of Him, His blessing us is doing well for us; those whom He blesseth they are blessed indeed. (2) "The Lord make His face shine upon thee." Alluding to the shining of the sun upon the earth, to enlighten and comfort it, and to renew the face of it. "The Lord love thee, and make thee know that He loves thee." We cannot but be happy if we have God's love, and we cannot but be easy if we know that we have it. (3) "The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee." This is to the same purpose with the former, and it seems to allude to the smiles of a father upon his child, or of a man upon his friend whom he takes pleasure in. If God gives us the assurances of His special favour, and His acceptance of us, that will put gladness into the heart (Psa. iv. 7, 8). 4. That the fruits of this favour conveyed by this blessing are protection, pardon, and peace. (1) Protection from evil (ver. 24). "The Lord keep thee," for it is He that keepeth Israel, and neither "slumbers nor sleeps" (Psa. cxxi. 4), and all believers are kept by the power of God. (2) Pardon of sin (ver. 25). The Lord be gracious or merciful unto thee. (3) Peace (ver. 26), including all that good which goes to make up a complete happiness. (4) God here promiseth to ratify and confirm the blessing (ver. 27). "They shall put My name upon the children of Israel." God gives them leave to

make use of His name in blessing the people, and to bless them as His people called by His name. This included all the blessings they could pronounce upon them, to mark them for God's peculiar, the people of His choice and love. God's name upon them was their honour, their comfort, their safety, their plea: "we are called by Thy name, leave us not." It is added, "and I will bless them." A Divine blessing goes along with Divine institutions, and puts virtue and efficacy into them. What Christ saith of the peace is true of the blessing. When God's ministers pronounce the blessing, "Peace be to this congregation," if the sons of peace and heirs of blessing be there, the peace, the blessing shall rest upon them (Luke x. 5, 6). For in every place where God doth record His name, He will meet His people and bless them. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*) *The blessing of the high priest:—I. THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF THIS BLESSING.*

1. It was a blessing given through a priest. Christ, as the great High Priest who offered Himself without spot unto God, is the Divine channel of blessing. Do we know the Lord's Anointed? 2. This benediction is of the nature of intercession. Never forget that Christ "made intercession for the transgressors." He has, moreover, a special pleading for believers (John xvii. 9). 3. This benediction is yet of a higher order than intercession. Here is not only faith pleading, but faith receiving and bestowing. The priest speaks the blessing for which he asks. 4. This blessing is sure. Christ is commissioned of the Father, and anointed of the Spirit, as the ambassador of peace. 5. It is continuous. God blesses ever; curses never. II. *THE BLESSING ITSELF.* 1. It passes from the priest to God. "The Lord bless thee." What a blessing the Lord gives! Have we not heard a mother say to her little child, "Bless you"? What a wealth of meaning she threw into it. But when God says, "Bless you!" there are infinity and immutability in it. There can be no limit to the goodwill of the infinite God. 2. Notice that the name of the Lord, or Jehovah, is three times mentioned. Here we hear the voice of One, yet Three. 3. Notice that this benediction is all along in the singular. Why? Because the people of God are one, and He views them as one, and so the blessing comes upon the entire Church as a whole. But, next, I think it is that every individual believer may take the whole of this benediction home to himself. III. *THE DIVINE AMEN.* Here is the authority repeated by way of confirmation of what has been said. "They shall put My name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them." The priest does his part, and then the Lord makes the blessing effectual. Herein is condescension on God's part, and honour and security for us. When the Lord's name is named upon anything He will guard His own dedicated things. The name of the Lord is a strong tower, and within it we are safe. I think I see here a confirmation of those blessings which are pronounced by good men. "They shall put My name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them." I loved to have my grandfather's blessing when I was preaching the Word in early days. He has now gone into the glory; but he blessed me, and none can take away the name of God from me. Most of you will remember the blessings of good men who are now gone to glory; and God confirms those blessings. He allows His people, whom He has made priests and kings unto God, to put His name upon others, and to pronounce blessings upon them. Their word shall stand, and what they bind on earth shall be bound in heaven. And then comes, best of all, the blessing of our God most surely promised. "I will bless them"; they shall have their troubles, but I will bless them through their troubles. When they have earthly goods I will bless them and make them real comforts. I will bless their basket and their store. If those earthly comforts are taken away I will give them compensation a thousandfold in myself. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Israel blest and kept:—1.* The blessing was put into the mouth of Aaron the high priest, in this as in other points a type and figure of the Lord Jesus Christ. But Aaron could only pronounce the blessing; Jesus gives it. 2. Observe how, by implication, the doctrine of the Trinity is here set forth. I. "THE LORD BLESS THEE." The blessings meant would seem to be chiefly spiritual. Not that we are to think lightly of temporal favours. They are left-hand blessings, if not right-hand mercies; they are gifts to be thankful for on earth, if not graces that take to heaven; provision for the perishing body, if not food for the immortal soul. Health, strength, such a measure of worldly goods as shall keep the wolf from the door and enable us to owe no man anything but love, children growing up to be a comfort to their parents, a kind and affectionate partner, warm and faithful friends, an untarnished name, who shall say that these are not blessings for which God is to be praised? And yet how infinitely short do these temporal blessings, which perish in the using, fall of spiritual blessings which endure for evermore. 1. Godly fear in the heart—that fountain of life by

which an awakened sinner departs from the snares of death—is not that of all blessings first and foremost because the “beginning of wisdom?” It is “a fountain of life,” and, like a river, is only increased and deepened by successive additions of grace. If we have not the beginning we can have neither the middle nor end. 2. But is not faith a blessing too? And who know faith to be a blessing? Those who are deeply exercised and tried by an unbelieving heart. 3. And is not hope a blessing too? 4. Love. 5. Patience. 6. Testimonies of God’s mercy and grace to the soul. 7. Is not the rod often a blessing? II. “AND KEEP THEE.” Blessing first and keeping afterwards. The blessing given, and then, when given, the blessing kept. The letter written, and then sealed; the jewel put into the casket, and then the casket locked. “The Lord keep thee.” We cannot keep ourselves. 1. I need hardly observe that the first and foremost is to be kept from positive evil. The Lord asked of the Father for His disciples, “I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world”—no; let them suffer there as I have suffered before—“but keep them from the evil.” And this will be first and foremost in the petitions of every child of God who knows his own evil heart and has suffered from its weakness and treachery, that the Lord will keep him from open evil, that he may bring no distress and guilt upon his own conscience, or reproach upon the cause of God. 2. Error. 3. A spirit of delusion. III. “THE LORD MAKE HIS FACE SHINE UPON THEE.” 1. The allusion here seems to be to the sun. Sometimes the natural sun has not risen, and the world must needs be dark if the sun be still beneath the horizon. So with many gracious souls, it is darkness with them because at present neither the Day-star has appeared nor the Sun of Righteousness risen upon them with healing in His wings. But sometimes after the sun has risen we see not his face; dark clouds may obscure the face of that bright luminary throughout the whole day, and we may not get a single ray. So, many of the Lord’s family, after the Sun has risen upon them in the morning of their spiritual life may pass perhaps much of their subsequent time in the dark shadow, till perhaps at evening tide there is light, and a departing ray gilds the dying pillow. But, again, there are sometimes days when mists drive rapidly across the face of the bright orb of day, and yet occasionally he peeps through the breaking clouds. And is not this, in some measure, an emblem of the way in which the Sun of Righteousness is continually obscured by the mists and fogs which spring up out of our unbelieving heart, hidden from view by the doubts and fears that, like the vapours of the valley, spread themselves to our view over His beauteous face? Yet there are times when He gleams through the clouds and disperses the mists. When the Lord is pleased to bless the soul and shine upon it with any sweet manifestation, then He breaks in through the dark clouds; but they gather again. It is not in Christian experience one bright summer day. Our spiritual climate is humid, our inward latitude northern. 2. “The Lord make His face shine upon thee.” Is the Lord, then, sovereign in these matters? Can we not lift up our hand and remove the cloud? We have as much power to stretch forth our hand and sweep away the mists that obscure the Sun of Righteousness, as we have power with the same hand to sweep away a London fog. How this puts the creature into his right place! and the creature is only in his right place when he is nothing, and God is all in all. 3. “The Lord make His face shine upon thee.” And if He make His face shine upon thee, He will make thy face shine too. IV. “AND BE GRACIOUS UNTO THEE.” How sweet the gospel is! But what makes the gospel sweet? That one word which sheds a perfume through the whole—grace. Take grace out of the gospel and you destroy the gospel. Grace pervades every part and every branch of the blessed gospel; it is the life of the gospel; in a word, it is the gospel itself. V. “THE LORD LIFT UP HIS COUNTENANCE UPON THEE.” The meaning of this expression may, I think, be illustrated by a simple figure. A child has been disobedient to, or otherwise displeased its parent. When we offend a person, his face is not toward us as at other times. It was so with Laban towards Jacob; and if we have in any way incurred a friend’s or superior’s displeasure we watch instinctively his countenance. Is it down or up? Does it wear a frown or a smile? Is it looking upon us with the eye of affection, or are the eyes averted? We can tell in a moment if we know the countenance. Thus is the blessing asked, “The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee,” as a kind and affectionate parent upon an obedient child. VI. “AND GIVE THEE PEACE.” Oh what a blessing! It is this that makes the pillow easy in life, and will alone make that pillow easy in death—peace with God through Jesus Christ, “the peace of God which passeth all understanding.” The blessing that the gracious soul most earnestly covets is peace; for this is the sweetest honey-drop in

God's cup. It is true that it does not make the heart overflow like joy, nor to dance with exultation like the first beaming in of the rays of hope, nor melt it down like visits of love; but it is in some respects sweeter than all, because it so settles down the soul into sweet assurance; it is the realisation of the Saviour Himself, for "He is our peace," and may thus be called the crowning blessing. But see how the links of this Divine chain meet. "The Lord bless thee"—link the first; "and keep thee"—link the second; "the Lord make His face shine upon thee"—the third; "and be gracious unto thee"—the fourth; "the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee"—the fifth; "and give thee peace"—the sixth. Six blessed links, and all united into one continuous chain; for when the Lord begins to bless, He ends with peace. We need wish no greater nor pray for a higher blessing than peace, for God has none greater to give. When a father dies he leaves his children all his goods. Jesus, before He died, said, "Peace I leave with you; My peace give I unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you." It was His last legacy; His dying gift; in His own eyes of the greatest value, and it should be such in ours. (*J. C. Philpot.*) *The pastor's wish and prayer:—I. LET US REFLECT ON THE*

NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE BLESSINGS HERE INVOLVED. 1. Divine benediction. In a world in which everything is rather semblance than reality, how delightful the thought that there is One—the Uncreated and Unconditional, the Ever-present and Ever-true, who is not more able than He is willing to overtake all the conditions of our being, and to do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think! Our weakness can never fall to a depth lower than His power can reach. Our necessities can never exceed His resources. Our difficulties can never be so involved but that His wisdom can direct us. Our sorrows can never be so acute, or so accumulated, but His Spirit can assuage and relieve us. 2. Divine preservation. Not only "the Lord bless thee," but "keep thee." The consciousness that with a finite and dependent nature we are in a world of temptation, must ever render acceptable and blessed the help of another mightier and more able. 3. Divine illumination. "The Lord make His face to shine upon thee." The reference here is doubtless to that mysterious symbol of His presence which God vouchsafed to His ancient Church, as the outward and visible expression of His favour and love. We rise from the material into the spiritual, and repose in the promise of that inward light which is ever streaming from the Spirit through the truth to guide and cheer and render certain the steps of the wanderer across the desert of life. 4. Divine communication. "The Lord be gracious unto thee." The grace of God is but another expression for His infinite and exhaustless bounty. The highest conception which we can form of the Divine benevolence is derived from the work of human redemption. Herein is love. In no other act of His administration is it so conspicuous or so glorious. Salvation is grace running out into infinite and everlasting kindness. And what are all the communications of spiritual blessing to the soul but the love of God ever repeating itself, and assuring us that the treasures of eternity are unlocked to supply our need? 5. Divine manifestation. "The Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon thee." What will heaven be but this perfected and perpetuated in the immediate presence of God? 6. Divine satisfaction. "The Lord give thee peace." It is a question in mechanics whether there be such a thing as a body in a state of perfect rest. We confess ourselves to be in a position not to solve the problem. Of this however we are certain, that in the spiritual world there is a centre of eternal repose on which the whole universe may rest for ever. The soul of man is torn and distracted with unfulfilled desires; and possess what he may, while one single longing is left unsatisfied the perfection of inward quiet and peace is impossible. This can only come with that completeness of life which is enjoyed in God. II. *LET US INQUIRE INTO THE EVER-LIVING AND UNCHANGEABLE SOURCE OF SUCH INESTIMABLE BLESSING.* The incommunicable name Jehovah, here translated Lord, includes within itself every possible perfection and excellence. It not only points to the sum of being, but to the fountain of blessedness. His eternity we place in opposition to all that is temporary; His immutability in opposition to all that is changing; His immortality in opposition to whatever has in it the seeds of decay and death; His all-sufficiency and infinite felicity in opposition to all that is inadequate and unsatisfying. (*R. Ferguson, LL.D.*) *A comprehensive benediction:—*What does this prayer not include? What a richness and plenitude of Divine mercy does it bring into view? It expresses as perfectly as any human words can express, the immense and infinite good which can be found in God, as the Root of all being and the Fountain of all happiness. What more could we ask on your behalf than that you may individually be the chosen objects

of the unchangeable love and fatherly care of Him, who, while He has the weight of all worlds upon His arm, yet stoops to feed the ravens when they cry; who, amid the government of worlds, is not unmindful of individuals, and who, while He is guiding the stars in their course, is at the same moment numbering the very hairs of your heads? What more can we ask for you, than that He who never sleeps, and whose eyelids never slumber, whose power fainteth not, and who is ever travelling forth in the greatness of His strength mighty to save, may watch over you and preserve you, give you more than the warrior's shield of triple brass, and bruise every enemy under your feet? What more can we now ask for you than that He, who ever lives and moves in the light of His own eternity, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the deeper and ever growing knowledge of Himself, fill your soul with the everlasting beamings of truth, cause the sunshine of His presence to break through every cloud, and falling softly on your steps, make your path like that of the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day? What more can we ask for you, than that He whose eternal love prompted Him to provide for the redemption of our race, may unlock the treasures of His mercy, and bless you with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, may grant you according to the riches of His grace, and, adding to the plenitude of His grace the riches of His glory, thus fill you unto His own fulness? What more can we ask for you, than that He whose name is the Lord—the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, slow to anger, abundant in goodness and in truth—while He conceals the intenser glory of His nature, would ever manifest Himself unto you, take you into deeper communion with His Spirit, open up heaven to your view, and fill your vision with the glories of immortality? What more can we ask for you, than that He who is the only centre of rest for His dependent universe, may take from your nature every unholy and disturbing element, and give you that peace which passeth all understanding, sanctify you in soul, body, and spirit, and lift you above the din and distraction of this noisy and conflicting world, introduce you into the deep quiet of His own Infinite Being, and fill you with the joy which is unspeakable? What more can we ask for you, than that this goodness and mercy may follow you all the days of your life, and that when you enter the dark valley which separates the silence of eternity from the murmurs of time, you may be conscious of the immediate presence of the glorified Redeemer, and dropping the worn-out garment of the flesh, take your place re clothed and immortal, before the throne of God? (*Ibid.*) *The golden blessing*:—I. THE GOLDEN BLESSING WAS GIVEN THROUGH A MEDIATOR. The Lord spake to Aaron through Moses. Jesus Christ is our Mediator, through whom all spiritual blessings are given. II. THE BLESSING WAS GIVEN BY PRIESTLY LIPS. It was Aaron, and his sons, who were to bless the children of Israel. God spake to Moses, Moses to Aaron, Aaron to the people. Jesus Christ is both Mediator and Priest. He is a mediatorial Priest, and a priestly Mediator. There is no blessing apart from the true priesthood and sacrifice. III. THIS THREEFOLD BLESSING TELLS OF A TRINITY IN UNITY, AND A UNITY IN TRINITY. Faith believes it, but reason cannot understand it. IV. IN THIS BENEDICTION WE HAVE THE EARNEST OF ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS. What a fulness there is! V. THE BLESSING WAS FOR ALL ISRAEL. "On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel." It was a common blessing for all the tribes. It is a blessing for those who are rejoicing, and for those who are sorrowing; for those who are praying, and for those who are praising. It is a blessing for the young, and for the old; for those who labour, and for those who suffer. It is a blessing for the living, if for them to live is Christ; for the dying, if they die in the Lord. VI. IT IS A BLESSING SECURED BY PURPOSE, PURCHASE, AND POWER. "I will bless them." Satan, and all our enemies, will be constrained to confess, "He hath blessed and I cannot reverse it." (*R. E. Sears.*) *The Divine blessing and keeping*:—What a joy to abide under the Divine blessing! This puts a gracious flavour into all things. If we are blessed, then all our possessions and enjoyments are blessed; yea, our losses and crosses, and even our disappointments. God's blessing is deep, emphatic, effectual. A man's blessing may begin and end in words, but the blessing of the Lord makes rich and sanctifies. The best wish we can have for our dearest friend is not, "May prosperity attend thee," but, "The Lord bless thee." It is equally a delightful thing to be kept of God; kept by Him, kept near Him, kept in Him. They are kept, indeed, whom God keeps: they are preserved from evil, they are reserved unto boundless happiness. God's keeping goes with His blessing, to establish it and cause it to endure. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *God's favour the comfort of the soul*:—It is God's presence which constitutes the

saint's morning. As the stars may impart some light and yet the brightness of all combined cannot form the light of day, but when the sun appears there is day forthwith, so God may make some comfort arise to a soul from secondary and inferior means; but it is He Himself alone who, by the shining of His face and the smiles of His countenance, causes morning. (*T. Burroughs.*) *Brightness to be renewed*:—A friend of mine has some diamonds. He tells me that if he sets these diamonds out in the strong sunlight for a time, and then removes them into a dark room, they will shine brilliantly even amidst the darkness. But after a little while this brilliance becomes dim, and finally goes out altogether. The precious stones must be taken into the sunshine again if they are to be seen in the gloom. And is not this a parable of the life of Christians? God calls them His "jewels"; and if their Divine lustre is to be seen amidst the darkness of the world, they must often seek to look upon the face of the Sun of Righteousness. If they are careless about this their brightness will soon grow dim; but if they are faithful that brightness shall be constantly renewed. (*Christian Commonwealth.*) *Buoyant in the favour of God*:—As—in some summer's morning, which wakes with a ring of birds, when it is clear, leagues up into the blue, and everything is as distinctly cut as if it stood in heaven, and not on earth, when the distant mountains lie bold upon the horizon, and the air is full of the fragrance of flowers which the night cradled—the traveller goes forth with buoyant and elastic step upon his journey, and halts not till in the twilight shadows he reaches his goal, so may we, who are but pilgrims, go forth beneath the smile of God, upon our homeward journey. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Peace with God*:—I reverence hundreds and hundreds of men who don't hold my opinion; but when I lie dying I don't want their speculations to rest upon. I want that Book for a pillow, for that Book rests on the nature of things. That is the only honest Book in the world. That tells me what I am; that tells me how to get into the mood of peace with God; that is what I wanted on a cold winter's night as I rolled forty feet down a precipice, expecting instant death; and if that is what I wanted then, it's what I want any time, isn't it? What is true in our highest moments is true in all moments. And what we see only by flashes is true the whole day long, the whole year long, life through, eternity through. If there is any certainty, it is certainly for all time and places. Now it is certain that when I lie dying I want that Book for a pillow, and, among other things in a pillow, I want a certainty that I have attained similarity of feeling with God, and love what He loves, and hate what He hates. That will be enough to give me peace. What! What! I am depending on my own righteousness when I make this my pillow! I beg your pardon, that is not what I say. If my life is to be my pillow, I must put my whole life into the pillow. There would be more than one thorn in the pillow if I were to put my whole life in it. Is there anybody here who can put his whole life in his pillow and rest in peace? You are going to depend on your own righteousness? Put your whole life into the pillow, and then put your head on it, and it will not be the softest kind of a support for a dying hour. You may do as you please, but I, for one, feel very sure I am going hence, that I want to go hence in peace, that I cannot go in peace unless I love what God loves, and hate what God hates. (*Joseph Cook.*)

Ver. 27. Put My name upon the children of Israel.—*The Christian's Divine name*:—I. THE NAME OF GOD PUT UPON HIS PEOPLE INDICATES GOD'S LOVE TOWARDS THEM. II. THE NAME OF GOD PUT UPON HIS PEOPLE INDICATES THE RELATIONSHIP IN WHICH THEY STAND TO GOD. Not only His friends, but His children. III. THE NAME OF GOD PUT UPON HIS PEOPLE INDICATES GOD'S PROPERTY IN THEM. IV. THE NAME OF GOD PUT UPON HIS PEOPLE INDICATES THEIR CONFORMITY TO GOD'S WILL. V. THE NAME OF GOD PUT UPON HIS PEOPLE INDICATES THE RESEMBLANCE THEY BEAR TO GOD. VI. THE NAME OF GOD PUT UPON HIS PEOPLE INDICATES THE ASSURANCE THEY HAVE OF FINAL UNION WITH GOD. (*The Evangelical Preacher.*) *God's name upon His people*:—Your old name is an ugly one. I suppose you know what your name is? If you have forgotten, let me remind you that your name is entered in God's Book as "sinner." I do not think you will be sorry to exchange that bad name for a better. I knew a lady once who had a very ugly name, and she could not bear to be called by it. She got all her friends to promise never to use it, and she always signed herself by a pretty name which she selected for herself out of many others. But of course, that never altered the fact that her real name was the old and ugly one. Just so, you may not like the name "sinner," and you may call yourself by anything else, and persuade everybody that it does

not belong to you, but that never alters the fact that you are a "sinner." God gave you the name, and God alone can change it. But oh! if you long for a "new name," tell Him so. He has one ready for you, and such a splendid, beautiful, adorable name! "I will write on him My new name." (*Eva Poole.*) *Valued because of the Giver*:—When our soldiers returned from that great succession of blunders, the Crimean War, those who had specially distinguished themselves were marshalled in a line to receive the crosses or medals which rewarded their valorous merit from the Queen. As she passed along the line she took the decorations one by one from a salver carried by her side and pinned it to the breast of the happy recipient. As she was pinning one on it slipped from her hand and fell to the ground. A little girl, who was near, picked it up and was proceeding to pin it to the soldier's breast, when he stepped a pace back and said, "No; I do not value that piece of metal. It is the hand which bestows it I value." So with the gifts which God gives us here, though they are of themselves of priceless value, yet even more precious is the knowledge that they are bestowed by our heavenly Father.

CHAPTER VII.

VERS. 1-4. The princes of Israel . . . brought their offering.—*The offering of the princes*:—The offering of the princes is set out by certain circumstances, of the time when they offered, when Moses had fully set up the tabernacle and had sanctified it, &c., of the persons which offered, the princes of the tribes, the heads of the house of their fathers, and of the place where they are offered, it was before the Lord. Then their offering is described by the particulars that were offered, which is performed jointly or severally. The doctrine from hence is this, that a good work begun, especially furthering God's worship, is not to be intermitted until it be brought to perfection. We see this in Ezra v. 1, 2; vi. 14. The like zeal and forwardness we see in Neh. iv. 3, 4, &c. The apostle persuading the Corinthians to liberality toward the saints, willet them readily to perform that which they had willingly begun. The reasons are plain. 1. The God of heaven will prosper weak beginnings if there be a readiness and cheerfulness in us. This should be a great encouragement unto us, as it was to Nehemiah (Neh. ii. 20). 2. If we look back we are not apt to God's kingdom (Luke ix. 62). If we give over we lose our labour, we miss our reward. 3. It is better not to begin than, having begun, not to proceed; better never to lay the first stone in the building than, having laid a good foundation, not to make an end, because it will be said to our reproach (Luke xiv. 30). 1. This serves, first, to reprove such as give over their profession, resting in a good work begun and in weak and small beginnings. 2. Secondly, it reproveth such as stand at a stay, such as neither go forward nor backward, but are always the same men, and look where you left them, there you shall be sure to find them. These are earthly minded and savour only of the earth. 3. Thirdly, such deserve to be reprov'd who hate those that go before and beyond them in the duties of piety, in gifts of knowledge and understanding. 4. Fourthly, it is our duty to proceed in sanctification, and labour to bring forth fruit evermore in old age (Psa. xcii. 15). (*W. Attersoll.*) *Suitable offerings for God's house*:—Why do they offer chariots, and oxen to draw them? Because these things were fit and good for the use of the tabernacle, to carry at removes such things as were to be carried, and to carry them dry. Learn by it that good hearts to Godward do not only give, but they give fit things, such as are most requisite for the service of God, the comeliness of His Church, the use of the minister, and the benefit of the whole congregation; yea, they to this end cast their heads, and observe what is wanting; what would do well if it were had, what is now unseemly, and what would be more seemly for the reverence of God's house, giving themselves no rest till either by themselves, at their own private charge, or by the parish at their public charge, such things be prepared. They are affected to God's houses, as others are to their own, who are ever decking them with all necessaries till they are to their liking. Such a virtue as I may boldly say, God would sooner cease to be God, which we know is impossible, than forget to reward it. Do we remember in our own houses who gave us this and who gave us that, of plate, of household, of ornaments, or whatsoever, and will God forget in His house who gave anything for the necessary use, or greater

beautifying it? We cannot think it, and our consciences tell us it cannot be. But even a thousand times more will God respect such love than any man can do. Make use of it then, I beg of you, and so show your heart to God in adorning His house and advancing His service, as living and dying He may fill your heart with His sweet comforts for it, bless you, and bless your friends after you, which He will do, even as He is God. (*Bp. Babington.*) *Princely liberality*:—A wealthy European monarch has been fired with enthusiasm for Africa. When I visited King Leopold I asked him, "What makes you so earnest about Africa?" I was touched with his reply. He said, "You know God took away from me my son, my only son, and then He laid Africa upon my heart. I am not spending the revenue of Belgium on it, but my own private resources, and I have made arrangements that when I die this civilising and evangelising work in Africa shall still go on." At the present time the king is expending £80,000 a year in Africa out of his private purse. (*Grattan Guinness.*) *Princely solicitude in regard to duty*:—During the illness of King Edward the Sixth, who died in the sixteenth year of his age, Ridley, in a sermon which he preached before him, much commended works of charity, and showed that they were enjoined on all men, especially on those in higher stations. The same day, after dinner, the king sent for the doctor into the gallery, made him sit in a chair by him, and would not suffer him to be uncovered. After thanking him for his sermon, he repeated the chief points of it, and added, "I took myself to be chiefly touched by your discourse; for as in the kingdom I am next under God, so must I most nearly approach to Him in goodness and mercy. As our miseries stand most in the need of help from Him, so are we the greatest debtors. And therefore, as you have given me this general exhortation, direct me, I entreat you, by what particular act I may best discharge my duty." *Prayer as a gauge of liberality*:—A gentleman canvassing for an important benevolent enterprise was about to call on a certain wealthy professor of religion who was more devout than generous. Ignorant of this fact, he asked his last contributor how much he thought the man would give. "I don't know," was the reply; "if you could hear him pray you'd think he would give all he is worth." The collector called on the rich man, and to his surprise received a flat refusal. As he was taking his leave, it occurred to him to repeat what he had been told. "I asked a man," said he, "how much you would probably give, and he replied, 'If you could hear that man pray, you'd think he would give all he is worth.'" The rich man's head dropped, and his eyes filled with tears. He took out his pocket-book, and handed his visitor a liberal contribution.

Vers. 5-9. Give them unto the Levites, to every man according to his service.—*Divine bestowment varied and proportionate*:—I. THAT GOD'S GIFTS ARE VARIED. 1. Men differ widely in many things—parentage, birthplace, physical vigour, mental capacity, education, spiritual gifts, &c. 2. For many of these differences they are themselves largely accountable. Some are crippled by their own indolence, extravagance, neglect, intemperance; others advance by their thrift, sobriety, perseverance, economy, and indomitable industry, to large influence and wealth. 3. But though the way in which men bear themselves may account for many of the differences between them, there are a thousand discrepancies which cannot be thus explained. No child is born in Abyssinia, or on the banks of the Ganges, or in crowded London because it wills it. Men are sick without being to blame for it, and women poor through no fault of their own. We must refer these problems to the Divine sovereignty. There is no other solution for many of life's mysteries. "Even so Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." If Gershon and Kohath complain that Merari has more than they, Moses' sufficient answer will be, "God ordained it so." 4. This truth, apprehended and believed, would destroy a thousand seeds of discontent, envy, and socialistic heresy. It is God who bestows wealth (*Deut. viii. 18*), honours (*Psa. lxxv. 6, 7*), power (*Rom. xiii. 1*). We receive gracefully the assignment of an earthly superior; why not as gracefully what God appoints? II. GOD'S GIFTS ARE PROPORTIONATE. In each case He proportions the means of transportation to the burden assigned. 1. That which is well proportioned is not excessive. This is true of a book, speech, building; eminently true of God's work. God is bountiful, but never wasteful. We possess no talents or opportunities to be counted superfluous. Christ's sufferings are proportioned to the sinner's guilt. 2. Not defective. (1) Let those who are called to trust in Christ remember that His sacrifice, if indispensable, is also fully sufficient. (2) Let Christian workers remember that with the call will come the qualifications. (*W. T. Sabine.*) *Endowments*

and requirements :—I. AS MOSES APPOINTED TO THE SONS OF LEVI CERTAIN FACILITIES, SO THE CREATOR HAS ENDOWED MAN WITH CERTAIN CAPABILITIES FOR WORK IN HIS SERVICE. 1. Understanding. 2. Invention. 3. Will-power. 4. Judgment. 5. Affections. 6. Physical organs. II. AS MOSES REQUIRED THE SONS OF LEVI TO USE THEIR FACILITIES, SO GOD DEMANDS THE EXERCISE OF OUR CAPABILITIES. 1. Yet how much indifference on the part of man in exercising and developing his faculties in useful and honourable employment! Many, instead of gaining their livelihood in the intended way, by the sweat of their face, study all manner of trickery and sin to satisfy their wants. 2. And how many professing Christians become so absorbed in worldly affairs as to neglect the business of the soul. God has claims superior to all claims of the world. III. GOD'S REQUIREMENTS ARE NO GREATER THAN OUR ENDOWMENTS. If we cannot give thousands, we can at least devote our "two mites." A beautifully tinted leaf in the wood cannot be seen at a distance, yet it contributes its part to the glorious autumnal picture. IV. MAN MUST USE HIS CAPABILITIES ACCORDING TO DIVINE APPOINTMENT. It is a solemn thing to trifle with the plans of God. Every man has a special power or gift, and "he who lives by other laws than those that wrapt his genius at his birth," defeats, in a measure, the object of his creation. (*W. G. Thrall.*) *An ancient offering, and its modern lessons* :—I. THEY WHO HOLD THE MOST HONOURABLE POSITIONS SHOULD BE MOST LIBERAL IN CONTRIBUTIONS TO WORTHY OBJECTS. II. THEY WHO ARE NOT ENTIRELY ENGAGED IN RELIGIOUS MINISTRIES SHOULD SEEK TO HELP THOSE WHO ARE SO ENGAGED. III. GOD IS GRACIOUSLY PLEASED TO ACCEPT OF MAN'S OFFERINGS. IV. GIFTS FOR RELIGIOUS PURPOSES SHOULD BE USED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WILL OF GOD. V. IN THE DIVINE ARRANGEMENTS HELP IS GRANTED UNTO MEN ACCORDING TO THEIR RESPECTIVE NEEDS. (*W. Jones.*)

Vers. 10–89. *The princes offered for dedicating of the altar.*—*Such as have greatest blessings and gifts, must be most forward in God's service* :—We heard before of the offering performed jointly by the princes, now let us see the offerings which they brought severally. For besides the chariots and the oxen, each of these great commanders of the people offered unto God for His service in the tabernacle a charger of fine silver weighing 130 shekels, a silver bowl of 70 shekels, and one spoon of ten shekels of gold full of incense, all which they performed at the same time when the altar was dedicated to God by Aaron, and before they marched from Sinai toward their conquest of the promised land. The weight of all the 12 silver chargers and the 12 silver bowls amounted unto 2,400 shekels of silver, and the weight of gold in the incense spoons did amount to 120 shekels of gold, which maketh of shekels of silver 1,200, every shekel of gold valuing ten of silver, so that the whole sum which they offered at this time was about 420 pounds sterling. These princes offered before with men and women, yet now they come again and think they can never do enough toward the furtherance of the tabernacle and the worship of God. 1. The doctrine from hence is that they which have most outward blessings and greatest ability must be most forward in God's worship and service. In Ezra it appeareth, they "all gave according to their ability" (chap. ii. 69). The chief of the fathers, when they came to the house of the Lord, offered freely for the house of God to set it up in his place. So in Nehemiah it appeareth how bountiful he and the princes and the people were. "They gave much silver and gold to finish the work of the Lord." The examples of David and Solomon in this kind are very evident and apparent, for the which one of them prepared to the work, and the other employed and bestowed upon the work is exceeding great, as appeareth in the holy history (1 Chron. xviii. 11, &c.). And so much the rather we should employ our blessings and gifts to the service of God, and so give them after a sort to Him that gave them first unto us, because it is a sign that our affection is set upon the worship of God, and an assurance to our own hearts that we love Him and His house (1 Chron. xxix. 3, 4). 2. Every one is bound to glorify God with his riches, knowing that they are but stewards and dispensers of them, of which they must give an account unto God (Luke xvi. 2). To this end hath God bestowed them, and to this end we have received them, and therefore to this end they should be employed. 3. This is a certain rule that "To whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required" (Luke xii. 48). He that hath little committed unto him hath the less account and shorter reckoning to make, but to whom men have committed much, of him they will require more; so is it with God, if He have left us five talents He will ask five of us again. First, this serveth to reprove the forgetfulness and thankfulness of such as never consider the end wherefore God hath blessed them, giving themselves wholly to carnal liberty and security, and so are more backward in good

things than if they had never received so many and so great blessings from God. Secondly, it reproveth all idle and negligent teachers who have received many good gifts and graces profitable for the Church of God, and yet never use them, like the covetous person who hoardeth up great treasures, but suffereth no man to be the better for them : like the sluggish servant in the parable, or like unto those that cover the candle under a bushel that it can give no light unto them that are in the house. Wherefore hath God given greater gifts but that such should take greater pains ? How many are there that desire great livings, but they do not desire to bestow great labour among them ? Our reward shall not be according to our gifts, but according to our labours. Lastly, seeing such as have received outward blessings ought to be most forward to do good with them, we must know that thus also it ought to be in spiritual blessings. (*W. Attersoll.*) *The princes' offerings for the dedication of the altar* :—I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE OFFERINGS FOR THE DEDICATION

OF THE ALTAR. 1. Their offerings express the sense of equality of obligation. Every tribe, by its prince, presents the same kind of offering, and in the same quantity as an expression of their equal indebtedness to God. There are certain mercies which all men have in common ; certain Divine gifts bestowed upon all men ; Christ "died for all" men ; and there are certain obligations to God in which all men share. 2. Their offerings express symbolically the Divine calling of the nation to be holy unto the Lord. All the vessels presented were for sacrificial uses, all the animals were ceremonially clean and such as were proper for sacrifices ; all the other gifts were of the best quality and were to be used in the worship of God. By these things it was indicated that the people were to be a separate people, entirely dedicated to God, and that God was to dwell in their midst. The lesson for us is that God is to be worshipped with our highest and best. 3. Their offerings express symbolically the great truths taught by the different sacrifices. II. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE

RECORD OF THE OFFERINGS FOR THE DEDICATION OF THE ALTAR. 1. The pleasure of God in the gifts of His people. "That everything is so particularly noted," says Babington, "and the weight so precisely mentioned, may teach us to our comfort, what an observation there is in God of the gifts we bestow on Him in promoting His glory, advancing His service, maintaining His ministers in a liberal manner, relieving the poor and doing such good things as with God and man are praiseworthy. Surely the number, the measure, with all circumstances, are observed ; and the Lord is a plenteous Rewarder of all love to Him." 2. The permanence of good works. The grateful heart will for ever cherish the memory of the kind service or generous gift. "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance." The noble deed shall live and bring forth fruit. And the doer himself by his deed has gained somewhat of nobility and strength. Conclusion : Our subject is most fruitful of encouragement to—1. Liberality of giving to promote worthy objects.

2. Diligence in working to promote worthy objects. (*W. Jones.*) *Rich givers and rich gifts* :—I. THE PRINCES AND GREAT MEN WERE FIRST AND FOREMOST IN THE SERVICE OF GOD. Those who are entitled to precedence should go before in good works. II.

THE OFFERINGS THEY BROUGHT WERE VERY RICH AND VALUABLE. In works of piety and charity we ought to be generous according to our ability. He that is the best should be served with the best we have. III. They brought their offerings EACH ON A SEVERAL DAY, in the order that they had lately been put into, so that the solemnity lasted twelve days. God appointed that it should thus be done on several days.

1. That the solemnity might be prolonged, and so might be universally taken notice of by all Israel, and the remembrance of it more effectually preserved. 2. That an equal honour might thereby be put upon each several tribe. In Aaron's breast-plate each had his precious stone, so in this offering each had his day. 3. Thus it would be done more decently and in order. God's work should not be done confusedly and in a hurry. Take time and we shall have done the sooner, or at least we shall have done the better. 4. God hereby signified how well pleased He is, and how well pleased we should be, with the exercises of piety and devotion. The repetition of them should be a continued pleasure to us, and we must not be weary of well-doing. If extraordinary services come to be done for twelve days together, we must not snuff at it, nor call it a task and a burden. 5. The priest and Levites having this occasion to offer the same sacrifices, and those some of every sort every day for so many days together, would have their hands well set in, and would be well versed in the laws concerning them. 6. The peace-offerings were all to be eaten the same day they were offered ; and two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, and five lambs were enough for one day's festival. Had there been more, especially if all had been brought of a day, there might have been danger of excess. The virtue of

temperance must not be left under the pretence of the religion of feasting. IV. All their offerings were exactly the same, WITHOUT ANY VARIATION, though it is probable the princes were not all alike rich, nor the tribes neither; but thus it was intimated that all the tribes of Israel had an equal share in the altar, and an equal interest in the sacrifices that were offered upon it. V. NASHON THE PRINCE OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH OFFERED FIRST BECAUSE GOD HAD GIVEN THAT TRIBE THE FIRST POST OF HONOUR in the camp, and the rest of the tribes acquiesced, and offered in the same order that God had appointed them to encamp. Judah, of which tribe Christ came, first; and then the rest. Thus, in the dedication of souls to God every man is presented in his own order, "Christ the first-fruits" (1 Cor. xv. 23). VI. Though the offerings were all the same, YET THE ACCOUNT OF THEM IS REPEATED AT LARGE FOR EACH TRIBE IN THE SAME WORDS. We are sure there are no vain repetitions in Scripture, what then shall we make of these repetitions? Might it not have served to say of this noble jury, That the same offering which their foreman brought, each on his day brought likewise? No; God would have it specified for each tribe. And why so? 1. It was for the encouragement of all acts of piety and charity, by letting us know that what is so given is lent to the Lord, and He carefully books it with every one's name prefixed to his gift because what is so given He will pay it again, and even a cup of cold water shall have its reward. He is not unrighteous to forget either the cost or labour of love (Heb. vi. 10). We find Christ taking particular notice what was cast into the treasury (Mark xii. 41). Though what is offered be but little, while it is according to our ability, though it be a contribution to the charity of others, yet it shall be recorded that it may be recompensed in the resurrection of the just. VII. THE SUM TOTAL IS ADDED AT THE FOOT OF THE ACCOUNT (vers. 84, 88) to show how well pleased God was with the mention of His free-will offerings, and what a great deal it amounted to in the whole, when every prince brought in his quota. How greatly would the sanctuary of God be enriched and beautified if all would in their places do their part towards it by exemplary purity and devotion, extensive charity, and universal usefulness? (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*) *The support of religious institutions*:—This dedication of the altar—I. SUGGESTS TO US SOME OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE WEALTHY. Wealth is a talent. He holds the wealthy responsible—1. To give of their wealth to carry on His work. God claims a share of all we get; how much that shall be He leaves to our conscience. He looks not so much at the amount as at the motive. 2. To take the lead in doing good—to be examples in giving. The wealthy are looked up to; if they fail to do their duty, not only do they fail to do good, but they also check others from doing so. II. IS A STRIKING ILLUSTRATION OF THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE. 1. God has left His work to be carried on by His people. 2. The voluntary principle is the most effective for doing this. (1) Because conscience is brought into action by it: giving becomes an act of worship. (2) Because man is then on his honour. (3) As a matter of fact it has never failed. 3. God is greatly pleased with it. Read ver. 89 with the text. He approves—(1) Because voluntary giving evinces real interest in His work—shows that it is done from love. The free-will offering is a good gauge of the people's hearts and interest. (2) He will accept nothing that is done from constraint. (3) He testifies to His pleasure, in His Word and by blessing those who so help His work. (*D. Lloyd.*) *He heard the voice of One speaking unto him.*—*The condescension of God, and the privileges of man*:—I. THE GREAT CONDESCENSION OF GOD. 1. The sacred place in which He speaks. It was in the Holy of holies in "the tabernacle of meeting." It was in this place that He had promised to meet with His servant. He specially manifests Himself to man in His house. 2. The grand medium through which He speaks. The mercy-seat: an illustration, perhaps a type, of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the true Mercy-seat (Rom. iii. 25). By the shedding of His blood the great atonement for the sins of the world was made. In Him God draws near to man and communes with him. He is the true Divine Oracle; through Him the most precious revelations of God have been made; in Him we hear the voice of God most clearly and graciously (Heb. i. 1-3). 3. The gracious purpose for which He speaks. In this instance, the voice from between the cherubim doubtless announced to Moses the gracious acceptance by Jehovah of the cheerful offerings of the princes of the tribes; and intimated that He had taken up His abode in their midst. All the utterances of God are for the benefit of man. II. THE GREAT PRIVILEGES OF MAN. 1. We may speak unto God. In time of grief or gladness, of perplexity or penitence, of doubt or dread, of triumph or tribulation, we may speak unto God in praise or prayer, or in the silent language of the heart, which He perfectly comprehends, assured that He will hear us graciously, and bless

us generously. 2. We may receive communications from God. We receive messages from Him through the sacred Scriptures, through the operations of His providence, and through the mysterious and gracious ministry of His Spirit. And how precious and helpful are His communications! Pardon to the guilty, peace to the penitent, joy to the sorrowful, direction to the perplexed, hope to the despondent, &c. III. THE CONSEQUENT DUTY OF MAN. 1. To wait upon God in His house. 2. To address God in His house. 3. To listen for the voice of God in His house. (W. Jones.)

Indications of the Incarnation:—By this we may know that God hears and accepts our prayers, if He gives us grace to hear and receive His Word, for thus our communion with Him is maintained. I know not why we may not suppose that upon each of the days on which these offerings were brought, probably while the priests and offerers were feasting upon the peace-offerings, Moses was in the tabernacle receiving some of these laws and orders which we have already met with in this and the foregoing book. Bishop Patrick observes that God's speaking to Moses thus by an audible articulate voice, as if He had been clothed with a body, might be looked upon as an earnest of the Incarnation of the Son of God in the fullness of time, when the Word should be made flesh and speak in the language of the sons of men. For however God at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake unto the fathers, He has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son. And that He that now spake to Moses, as the Shechinah or Divine majesty from between the cherubims, was the eternal Word, the second person in the Trinity, was the pious conjecture of many of the ancients. For all God's communion with man is by His Son, by whom He made the world and rules the Church; and who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. (Matthew Henry, D.D.)

The speech of the Divine Spirit:—It is told of Claus Harms, the preacher who was most blessed in the first half of our century, that he related to a Quaker how much daily he had to speak. The Quaker listened, and when Brother Harms had finished his narration, he asked, "Brother Harms, if thou speakest so much, when art thou quiet?" and when doth the Spirit of God speak to thee?" Harms was so impressed, that from that day forward he passed a certain portion of each day in retirement. (Professor Gess.)

Communion with God:—Standing by the telegraph wires one may often hear the mystic wailing and sighing of the winds among them, like the strains of an Æolian harp, but one knows nothing of the message which is flashing along them. Joyous may be the inner language of those wires, swift as the lightning, far reaching and full of meaning, but a stranger intermeddles not therewith. Fit emblem of the believer's inner life; men hear our notes of outward sorrow wrung from us by external circumstances, but the message of celestial peace, the Divine communings with a better land, the swift heart-throbs of heaven-born desire, they cannot perceive; man sees but the outer manhood, but the life hidden with Christ in God flesh and blood cannot discern.

Communion with God:—A converted heathen said, "I open my Bible and God talks with me; I close my Bible and then I talk with God." *The ear of the heart:*—"I talk to Him until I fall asleep," she (Madame Louise) said. I asked whether He answered her. "Oh, yes," she replied; "the ear of my heart hears His answer."

CHAPTER VIII.

VERS. 1-4. When thou lightest the lamps.—*The golden candlestick an emblem of the Church of God:*—I. THE PRECIOUSNESS AND SACREDNESS OF THE CHURCH OF GOD. II. THE LIGHT OF THE CHURCH OF GOD. III. THE MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH OF GOD, AND THEIR FUNCTION. IV. THE FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH OF GOD. "I would not give much for your religion," says Spurgeon, "unless it can be seen. Lamps do not talk; but they do shine. A lighthouse sounds no drum, it beats no gong; and yet far over the waters its friendly spark is seen by the mariner. So let your actions shine out your religion. Let the main sermon of your life be illustrated by all your conduct, and it shall not fail to be illustrious." Application: 1. To individuals. Are our lives luminous in the light of the Lord Jesus Christ? 2. To Churches. Are we making good our claim to a place in "the Church of the living God" by taking our part in performing the Divine function of that Church? Are we diffusing the light of God in Christ in this dark world? (W. Jones.) Moulded

and beaten work (with Exod. xxxii. 4) :—I have chosen these two texts to point out an instructive lesson regarding the easiness of sin and the difficulty of holiness. The material of the golden calf which Aaron constructed was poured into a mould and shaped without trouble; the material of the seven-branched candlestick had to be beaten out carefully and slowly with much toil and pains. I. The pattern of the calf was easily constructed; it required no originality, no effort of thought, only an exercise of memory; and Aaron cast their golden jewels into the familiar mould, and out of it came the familiar image. So easy, so natural, so inevitable was the process, that Aaron used language regarding it which seemed to imply that, when he lighted the furnace and poured into the mould the molten gold, the image of the calf came out of its own accord. It may be further remarked that, in order to get the image sharp and clear out of the mould, Aaron must have put into the gold an alloy of some inferior metal, or it was already in the ornaments of the Israelites. And is this not true of all sin? It has a mould prepared for it in a world lying in wickedness, and in the deceitful heart of man. The pattern of sin is as old as Adam. The first transgression was not only the root, but also the type of every transgression, just as the whole plant is a development and modification of the primitive leaf, and constructed after its pattern. Why is it that we think so little of articles cast in a mould, in comparison with those wrought by hand? Is it not because these moulded articles are easily made, involving the smallest expenditure of toil or time or thought? They can be manufactured and multiplied by the thousand with the greatest ease once the mould is formed. The maker puts as little as possible of himself into them. He is not an artist, but a mere mechanic. The essence of all sin is a desire to get things in the easiest way—to run things into moulds, rather than to hew or carve or build them with slow, patient toil and care. And hence when persons do not take thought or trouble to do what is right, they always blame circumstances and not themselves for the wrong. When they do not resist temptation they say that they could not help themselves. Sin is regarded as a misfortune demanding pity, and not a wilful act drawing down condemnation. II. The material of the seven-branched golden candlestick was not run into a mould already prepared for it. It was all hand-made work. It was the most elaborate of all the vessels of the sanctuary, because it represented the result of what all the other vessels typified and led up to—the light of the world, and yet it was beaten out of one solid piece of gold. The workman who fashioned it must have pondered minutely over every part, and bestowed immense labour and skill upon all its details; the pattern and symmetry of the whole must have been clearly in his mind, while from one mass of metal he beat out each shaft and floral ornament. The whole idea of it implied personal thought and toil and care. While it is easy for man to sin, it is difficult for man to be holy. He finds moulds for his sin lying ready to his hand, without any trouble. But he has to fashion, as it were, by the toil of his hands and the sweat of his soul, with the Divine help, the means by which he may be rescued from his sin and folly. We can mould a false diamond in glass or paste in a few minutes; but nature requires ages of slow, patient workmanship to crystallise the real diamond from the dark charcoal. We can cover common deal wood with an exquisitely grained veneer of walnut or mahogany at a small expense and with little effort; but the grain of the walnut or mahogany represents many years of strain and struggle, during which the tree grew its beautiful markings. Thus in the human world we can make easy imitations of moral and spiritual qualities, which when genuine can only be produced by slow, patient self-discipline, by many prayers and tears and toils. The paste diamond of religion, that glitters so brightly and deceives so many, can be manufactured in the mould of easy compliance with outward church duties and rites; the veneer of godliness can be assumed by a profession which costs nothing, and makes no demand of self-sacrifice upon the inner nature. But the deliverance from sin and the formation of holiness, which the salvation of Christ implies and involves, can only be through toil and suffering. (*H. Macmillan, D.D.*) *The lighted lamp*:—Who must light the lamps? Aaron himself (ver. 3). As the people's representative to God, he thus did the office of a servant in God's house, lighting his Master's candle. As the representative of God to the people, he thus gave them the significations of God's will and favour, which is thus expressed (Psa. xviii. 28). And thus Aaron himself was now lately directed to bless the people, "The Lord make His face to shine upon thee" (chap. vi. 25). The commandment is a lamp (Prov. vi. 23). The Scripture is a light shining in a dark place (2 Pet. i. 19). And a dark place indeed even the Church would be without it, as the tabernacle without the lamps, for it had no

window in it. Now the work of ministers is to light these lamps, by expounding and applying the Word of God. The priest lighted the middle lamp from the fire of the altar; and the rest of the lamps he lighted one from another: which signifieth that the fountain of all light and knowledge cometh from Christ, who has the seven spirits of God, figured by the seven lamps of fire (Rev. iv. 5); but that in expounding of Scripture, one passage must borrow light from another. He also supposeth, that seven being a number of perfection, by the seven branches of the candlestick it showed the full perfection of the Scriptures, which are able to make us wise to salvation. 2. To what end the lamps were lighted; that they might give light over against the candlestick, *i.e.*, to the part of the tabernacle where the table stood, with the shewbread upon it, over against the candlestick. They were not lighted like tapers in an urn, to burn to themselves, but to give light to the other side of the tabernacle, for therefore candles are lighted (Matt. v. 15). The lights of the world, the lights of the Church, must shine as lights. Therefore we have light, that we may give light. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*) *Men who would quench the light of truth*:—No light shone from the Ship Shoal Lighthouse, near Morgan City, U.S., on two consecutive nights in February. The unusual darkness at that point caused some surprise, but surprise was turned into indignation when the facts became known. One of the keepers had seen a man in a boat who needed assistance, his vessel being becalmed. The keeper kindly towed the boat to the lighthouse and treated the man hospitably. In the night the guest made a murderous attack on the two lighthouse-keepers, shooting both of them and inflicting dangerous wounds. He held possession of the lighthouse for forty-eight hours, during which he never lighted the lamps. Then, as he could not find food, he surrendered. A man more utterly depraved it is difficult to imagine. But there are many infidels who are trying to murder men's souls and to quench the warning light of the Bible. *Luminous centres*:—The globe of the earth is surrounded by a mass of atmosphere extending forty or fifty miles above the surface. Each particle of air is a luminous centre, receiving its light from the sun, and it radiates light in every direction. Were it not for this, the sun's light could only penetrate those spaces which are directly accessible to his rays. Thus, the sun shining upon the window of an apartment would illuminate just so much of that apartment as would be exposed to his direct rays, the remainder being in darkness. But we find, on the contrary, that although that part of the room upon which the sun directly shines is more brilliantly illuminated than the surrounding parts, these latter are nevertheless strongly illuminated. In the social world, too, there are luminous centres. These are noble souls, who, being especially blessed themselves, diffuse in every direction some of the blessings which they have received. Were it not for them, and their power of spreading brightness, goodness, and joy, the world would be indeed rayless and cold. (*Scientific Illustrations.*) *Secondary graces to be kept burning*:—On a dark stormy night, when the waves rolled like mountains, and not a star was to be seen, a boat was rocking and plunging near the Cleveland harbour. "Are you sure this is Cleveland?" asked the captain, seeing only one light from the lighthouse. "Quite sure, sir," replied the pilot. "Where are the lower lights?" "Gone out, sir." "Can you make the harbour?" "We must, or perish, sir!" And with a strong hand and a brave heart the old pilot turned the wheel. But, alas! in the darkness he missed the channel, and with a crash upon the rocks the boat was shattered, and many a life lost in a watery grave. Brethren, the Master will take care of the great lighthouse; let us keep the lower lights burning! *Obligation to keep the light burning*:—It is one of the chief temptations of Christians, and not least of those whose candlestick is the lofty one of the pulpit, to think unduly of themselves. Our anxiety should be, not, What do you think of us? but, What do you think of our message? Not, Do you esteem the light-holder? but, Do you walk in the light? This truth has likewise its application, on the other hand, for the pew. You go away, and ask, How did you like the sermon? but go home to-day, and ask yourselves, How did you like the truth? You may be ever so well pleased with sermons, and be none the better; but, if you receive the truth, it will save your soul; if you light your candle at the fire of God's altar, it will burn for ever. And while it shines for your own soul, it will shine through your life, as through a lantern, for the good of others also. Only "let your light shine before men," and they, "seeing your good works, will glorify your Father in heaven." Let it! It is its property to shine, if it gets fair treatment. It is not a question of the numbers, or rank, or influence of those who shall see it. Eyes or no eyes, you have to shine. The gentian fringes the mountain glacier with its drapery of blue, though seldom a

human eye may look upon it. The desert melon smells with a refreshing draught for the wayfarer, though not a human foot in half a century should pass that way. There God has placed it in readiness. If you help to light to heaven and happiness the humblest of God's creatures, you have done a glorious work. The Admiralty order carries with it a lesson to the believer. "Light the lamps every evening at sunset, and keep them constantly burning, bright and clear, till sunrise." There are no qualifications and no exceptions. If, in the world's night, no lamp were dim, and no light kindled by God's hand were shaded, it were happier for sinning and suffering humanity. It is only here we have the opportunity to shine in darkness. When the morning of the eternal day dawns upon us, our light shall be swallowed up in the surpassing glory, that needs no light from sun or moon. No bed or sofa is permitted in the watch-room of the lighthouse. None must be tempted to slumber at a post of so much responsibility. And, if such needful guarantees are taken for the safety of those who navigate our seas, is there less need for earnestness and watchfulness to remove peril from the way of those whose voyage must conduct either to glory or to ruin? No slumberous hours, no unguarded moments for those to whom the heavenly light has been entrusted. Nor must danger keep you back from duty. I have read of the keeper of an island lighthouse whose provisions were exhausted, whose frame was emaciated, and to whom the stormy sea for weeks suffered no access or relief, nightly lighting his lamp with an almost dying hand. Anything better than that no warning ray should stream across that perilous channel. (*R. H. Lundie, M.A.*) *Importance of a small light* :—Once I was down a coal mine. The man who received me was black and grimy, but he had an honest heart, and his smile was like sunlight crossing the grime. Down in the bowels of the mountain, dark and cheerless, I noticed his little oil-lamp. I knew that there was a sun blazing away up in the solar universe, but what was that? What concerned me down in the pit was the miner's little lamp, the wick so tiny, the oil so very scanty, the flicker of flame so little noticed, yet it was more precious to me at that time than the blazing sun. Oh believe me for effective work in the mass of a lost humanity, in the blackness and darkness of this fallen world, I believe Christ prizes more the little flicker of a humble Christian who will go and visit a sick one this Sabbath afternoon, than the blazing sun of this public assembly. Oh, you can cheer the heart of God by letting your light shine unnoticed by the world, but be assured that He notices it. (*John Robertson.*) *The glory of an unobtrusive light* :—The light of a true spiritual life must shine more or less conspicuously. From a gifted speaker or writer, it may stream out widely and afar, like the gleam of a beacon flaming from a mountain top. From an unendowed, retiring, obscure disciple, it may be only as the light of a lamp in a narrow room, noticed by few, yet not entirely lost to the view of men. A charming writer, speaking of such a modest soul, says: "A tiny flitting bird of slight song may with careful scrutiny be seen twisting in and out of the drooping fir tassels. Many would pass it unnoticed, but the observant eye will detect the gleam of a gold circlet upon the tiny gold-crested wren. Thus men will pass unregarding many a noiseless, retired worker for God in some sphere of seclusion and shade. But they who watch and know will be aware at times of the light of a saint's glory encircling the modest head." *Liberality and service viewed in the light of the sanctuary* :—Having read, in chapter vii., the lengthened statement of the princes' liberality, we, in our wisdom, might suppose that the next thing in order would be the consecration of the Levites, thus presenting, in unbroken connection, "our persons and offerings." But no. The Spirit of God causes the light of the sanctuary to intervene, in order that we may learn in it the true object of all liberality and service in the wilderness. Is there not lovely and moral appropriateness in this? Why have we not the golden altar, with its cloud of incense, here? Why not the pure table, with its twelve loaves? Because neither of these would have the least moral connection with what goes before or what follows after; but the golden candlestick stands connected with both, inasmuch as it shows us that all liberality and all work must be viewed in the light of the sanctuary, in order to ascertain its real worth. Those "seven lamps" express the light of the Spirit in testimony. They were connected with the beaten shaft of the candlestick which typifies Christ, who, in His Person and work, is the foundation of the Spirit's work in the Church. All depends upon Christ. Every ray of light in the Church, in the individual believer, or in Israel by and by, all flows from Christ. Nor is this all we learn from our type. "The seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick." Were we to clothe this figure in New Testament language, we should quote our Lord's words when He says to

us, "Let your light so shine before men," &c. (Matt. v. 16). Wherever the true light of the Spirit shines it will always yield a clear testimony to Christ. It will call attention not to itself, but to Him; and this is the way to glorify God. This is a great practical truth for all Christians. The very finest evidence which can be afforded of true spiritual work is that it tends directly to exalt Christ. If attention be sought for the work of the workman, the light has become dim, and the Minister of the sanctuary must use the snuffers. It was Aaron's province to light the lamps; and he it was who trimmed them likewise. In other words, the light which, as Christians, we are responsible to yield, is not only founded upon Christ, but maintained by Him, from moment to moment, throughout the entire night. Apart from Him we can do nothing. (C. H. Mackintosh.)

Vers. 5-7. Take the Levites, . . . and cleanse them.—*The Divine principle of cleansing*:—Here we have, in type, the only Divine principle of cleansing. It is the application of death to nature and all its habits. It is the word of God brought to bear upon the heart and conscience in a living way. Moses, as representing the claims of God, cleanses the Levites according to those claims; and they, being cleansed, are able to bring the sharp razor to bear upon all that was the mere growth of nature, and to wash their garments, which expresses, in typical form, the cleansing their habits according to the word of God. This was God's way of meeting all that appertained to Levi's natural state—the self-will, the fierceness, and the cruelty. The pure water and the sharp razor were called into action—the washing and shaving had to go on, ere Levi was fit to approach the vessels of the sanctuary. Thus it is in every case. There is, there can be, no allowance of nature among God's workers. There never was a more fatal mistake than to attempt to enlist nature in the service of God. It matters not how you may endeavour to improve or regulate it. It is not improvement, but death that will avail. What is the meaning of the initiatory act of Christianity—the act of baptism? Does it not set forth the blessed fact that "our old man"—our fallen nature—is completely set aside, and that we are introduced into an entirely new position? Truly so. And how do we use the razor? By rigid self-judgment, day by day; by the stern disallowance of all that is of nature's growth. This is the true path for all God's workers in the wilderness. (C. H. Mackintosh.)

Vers. 23-26. The Levites; from twenty and five years.—*Service*:—I. THE SERVICE GOD DEMANDS OF ALL LEVITES. 1. Burden-bearing. 2. Singing. 3. Study of the law, "Search the Scriptures." 4. Attendance on the ordinances of the sanctuary. II. GOD DEMANDS THE SERVICE IN OUR PRIME. "From twenty and five." III. GOD DEMANDS THIS SERVICE WHEN IT CAN BE MOST EASILY RENDERED. He suits the burden to the back. All He asks is, that we shall do what we can. (R. A. Griffin.) *The Divine Master and His human servants*:—I. THE NECESSITY OF FITNESS FOR THE DIVINE SERVICE. In learning any handicraft or trade, years are spent under instructors; for the practice of law or medicine men must have special training; and is it not important that they who engage in religious services should be qualified for such services? II. THE VARIETY OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE DIVINE SERVICE. 1. An encouragement to persons of feeble powers and narrow opportunities to try to do good. 2. A rebuke to those who plead inability as an excuse for their indolence in religious service. III. THE CARE OF THE GREAT MASTER FOR HIS SERVANTS. Conclusion. This subject supplies—1. Encouragement to enter into this service. "Come thou with us," &c. 2. Encouragement to persevere in this service. A glorious reward awaits those who patiently continue in well-doing. (W. Jones.) *Age and youth in relation to service*:—1. They were to enter upon the service at twenty-five years old (ver. 24). They were not charged with the carrying of the tabernacle and the utensils of it till they were thirty years old (chap. iv. 3). But they were entered to be otherwise serviceable at twenty-five years old—a very good age for ministers to begin their public work. The work then required that strength of body, and the work now requires that maturity of judgment and staidness of behaviour which men rarely arrive at till about that age: and novices are in danger of being lifted up with pride. 2. They were to have a writ of ease at fifty years old; then they were to return from the warfare, as the phrase is (ver. 25), not cashiered with disgrace—but preferred rather to the rest, which their age required, to be loaded with the honours of their office, as hitherto they had been with the burdens of it. They shall minister with their brethren in the tabernacle, to direct the junior Levites, and set them in; and they

shall keep the charge, as guards upon the avenues of the tabernacle, to see that no stranger intruded, nor any person in his uncleanness; but they shall not be put upon any service which may be a fatigue to them. If God's grace provide that men shall have ability according to their work, man's prudence should take care that men have work but according to their ability. The aged are most fit for truths, and to keep the charge; the younger are most fit for work, and to do the service. "Those that have used the office of a servant well, purchase to themselves a good degree" (1 Tim. iii. 13). Yet indeed gifts are not tied to ages (Job xxxii. 9), but "all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit." (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*)

CHAPTER IX.

VERS. 1-5. Keep the Passover.—*Ordinance of the Passover* :—The design of God in instituting this remarkable ordinance, the Passover, was to explain to us, as well as to prefigure to the Jews, the method of salvation through the blood of Christ. He is the one great Sacrifice for sin; and here the application to Him in His mediatorial work is most comprehensive. Behold the analogy. It holds—I. **WITH REGARD TO THE VICTIM WHICH WAS CHOSEN.** Was it a lamb? Christ is often so called on account of His innocence, meekness, and resignation (Isa. liii. 7; John i. 29; 1 Peter i. 19; Rev. v. 6). Was it chosen from the flock? Christ was taken from among His brethren (Acts iii. 22). Was it a male of the first year? Christ suffered in the prime of His days. Was it without blemish? Christ was altogether perfect (Heb. vii. 26; 1 Peter i. 19). II. **WITH REGARD TO THE OBLATION WHICH WAS MADE.** As the lamb was slain, so was Jesus (Rev. v. 9). As the lamb was slain before the whole assembly (Exod. xii. 6), so Jesus was publicly put to death. As the lamb was slain between the two evenings, so Jesus was offered between three o'clock and six (Matt. xxvii. 45). As the lamb was set apart four days before it was slain (Exod. xii. 3, 5), so Christ entered the city four days before His crucifixion (Matt. xxi. 1, &c.). III. **WITH REGARD TO THE BLOOD WHICH WAS SPRINKLED.** The blood was sprinkled with a bunch of hyssop (Exod. xii. 22), dipped into the basin; so the blood of Christ is the blood of the everlasting covenant, the deposit of privileges, which all become ours by the exercise of faith. The blood was sprinkled upon the door-posts of their dwellings. So the blood of Christ is to be applied to the hearts and consciences of believers (Heb. ix. 13, 14; x. 22). The blood was sprinkled upon the lintel and the side-posts; but not behind nor below the door. So the blood of Christ is not to be trodden under foot (Heb. x. 29). The blood secured every family where it was sprinkled, it being within the limits of the Divine protection, so that the destroying angel was forbidden to hurt them. So the blood of Jesus is the only refuge for the guilty. IV. **WITH REGARD TO THE FLESH WHICH WAS EATEN.** The flesh of the lamb was eaten roasted with fire, strikingly exhibiting the severity of our Saviour's sufferings (Isa. i. 6; lii. 14, 15; Psa. xxii. 14, 15). It was eaten whole, and not a bone broken, which was amazingly fulfilled in reference to Christ (John xix. 31-36). It was eaten in haste, with the staff in their hands, to intimate that Christ is to be received immediately without delay. It was eaten with bitter herbs, importing our looking to Christ with sorrow of heart, in remembrance of sin, as expressed in Zech. xii. 10. It was eaten with the loins girded, implying that we must be prepared for His coming (Eph. vi. 14). It was eaten with the feet shod, to remind us of the freedom and happiness which Christ imparts to the believing Israelites (compare Isa. xx. 2-4 with Rom. v. 11). It was eaten with unleavened bread, because we are to receive and profess Christ with unfeigned sincerity (1 Cor. v. 7, 8; John i. 47). Upon the whole, we learn from the subject the happy state of believers, who, though once afar off, are now made nigh by the blood of Christ; and likewise the unhappy state of unbelievers, who, rejecting the atonement, must inevitably perish. (*William Sleight.*) *The Passover and the Lord's Supper* :—There is this connection between the passover and the Lord's Supper, that the former was the type, the latter the memorial, of the death of Christ. Thus we read in 1 Corinthians v., "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." This sentence establishes the connection. The passover was the memorial of Israel's redemption from the bondage of Egypt; and the Lord's Supper is the memorial of the Church's redemption from the heavier bondage of

sin and Satan. Hence, as every faithful Israelite would surely be found keeping the passover, in the appointed season, according to all the rites and ceremonies thereof, so will every true and faithful Christian be found celebrating the Lord's Supper in its appointed season, and according to all the principles laid down in the New Testament respecting it. If an Israelite had neglected the passover, even on one single occasion, he would have been cut off from the congregation. And may we not ask in the face of this solemn fact, Is it a matter of no moment for Christians to neglect, from week to week, and month to month, the supper of their Lord? Are we to suppose that the One who, in Numbers ix., declared that the neglecter of the passover should be cut off, takes no account of the neglecter of the Lord's table? We cannot believe it for a moment. To a pious Israelite there was nothing like the passover, because it was the memorial of his redemption. And to a pious Christian there is nothing like the Lord's Supper, because it is the memorial of his redemption and of the death of his Lord. How is it, then, that any of God's people should be found neglecting the Lord's table? If the Lord Christ instituted the supper; if God the Holy Ghost led the early Church to celebrate it, and if He has also expounded it unto us, who are we that we should set up our ideas in opposition to God? No doubt, the Lord's Supper should be an inward spiritual mystery to all who partake of it; but it is also an outward, literal, tangible thing. There is literal bread, and literal wine—literal eating, and literal drinking. If any deny this, they may, with equal force, deny that there are literal people gathered together. We have no right to explain away scripture after such a fashion. Nor is it merely a question of subjection to the authority of scripture. There is such a thing as the response of love in the heart of the Christian, answering to the love of the heart of Christ. If our blessed and adorable Lord has in very deed appointed the bread and the wine in the supper as memorials of His broken body and shed blood; if He has ordained that we should eat of that bread and drink of that cup in remembrance of Him, ought we not, in the power of responsive affection, to meet the desire of His loving heart? (C. H. Mackintosh.)

Vers. 15-23. *The Cloud.*—*The history of the cloud*:—We have here the history of the cloud. Not a natural history—"who knows the balancings of the clouds?"—but a Divine history, of a cloud that was appointed to be the visible symbol of God's presence with Israel. I. When the tabernacle was finished this cloud, which before had hung on high over their camp, SETTLED UPON THE TABERNACLE AND COVERED IT; TO SHOW THAT GOD MANIFESTS HIS PRESENCE WITH HIS PEOPLE IN AND BY HIS ORDINANCES. II. That which appeared as a cloud by day APPEARED AS A FIRE ALL NIGHT; to teach Israel the constancy of His presence with them and care of them (Isa. xxvii. 5; Psa. cxxi. 6). III. This pillar of cloud and fire DIRECTED AND DETERMINED ALL THE MOTIONS, MARCHES, AND ENCAMPMENTS OF ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS. 1. As long as the cloud rested upon the tabernacle, so long they continued in the same place and never stirred. Though no doubt they were very desirous to be pressing forward in their journey towards Canaan, where they hoped to be quickly, yet as long as the cloud rested, if it were a month or a year, so long they rested (ver. 22). Note, be that believeth doth not make haste. There is no time lost whilst we are waiting God's time. It is as acceptable a piece of submission to the will of God to sit still contentedly when our lot requires it, as to work for Him when we are called to it. 2. When the cloud was taken up they removed, how comfortably soever they were encamped (ver. 17). Whether it moved by day or night they delayed not to attend its motions (ver. 21). And probably there were some appointed to stand sentinel day and night within ken of it, to give timely notice to the camp of its beginning to stir; and this is called keeping the charge of the Lord. The people being thus kept at a constant uncertainty, and having no time fixed for their stays and removes, were obliged to hold themselves in a constant readiness to march upon very short warning. And for the same reason we are kept at uncertainty concerning the time of our putting off the earthly house of this tabernacle, that we may be always ready to remove at the commandment of the Lord. 3. As long and as far as the cloud moved, so long and so far they marched; and just there where it abode they pitched their tents about it, and God's tent under it (ver. 17). Note, it is uncomfortable staying when God is departed, but very safe and pleasant going when we see God go before us, and resting where He appoints us to rest. Lessons: 1. The particular care God takes of His people. Nothing could be more significant of God's tenderness of Israel than the conduct of this cloud was. It led them by the right way (Psa. cvii. 7); went.

on their pace; God did by it, as it were, cover them with His feathers. We are not now to expect such sensible tokens of the Divine presence and guidance as this was. But the promise is sure to all God's spiritual Israel, that He will guide them by His counsel (Psa. lxxxiii. 24) even unto death (Psa. xlviii. 14); that all the children of God shall be led by the Spirit of God (Rom. viii. 14); that He will direct their paths who in all their ways acknowledge Him (Prov. iiii. 6). There is a particular providence conversant about all their affairs to direct and overrule them for the best. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord (Psa. xxxvii. 22). 2. The particular regard we ought to have to God in all our ways. In our affections and actions we must follow the direction of His Word and Spirit; all the motions of our soul must be guided by the Divine will; at the commandment of the Lord our heart should always move and rest. In all our affairs we must follow providence, reconciling ourselves to all its disposals, and bringing our mind to our condition, whatever it is. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*)

The pillar of cloud and fire.—I. AS AN EMBLEM OF DIVINE TRUTH. 1. Supernatural as to origin. 2. Stable: only a cloud, yet not dispersed. 3. Adapted to both night and day. 4. Reliable. 5. Intolerant: "This is the way," and no other. II. AS A SYMBOL OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE. 1. Different appearance to different characters. 2. Presented alternations of aspect to the same people. 3. Mysterious in its movements. 4. Aims at the good of all who follow its guidance. III. AS A TYPE OF THE DIVINE SAVIOUR. 1. Mysterious nature. 2. Challenges attention. 3. His purpose beneficent. 4. The source of great comfort. 5. Constant in His attachment. Lessons: 1. Seek to be on the right side of the cloud. 2. Seek it in the right place—over the tabernacle. 3. Follow its guidance. (*J. C. Gray.*)

The pillar of cloud and of fire.—I. THE PILLAR OF CLOUD AND OF FIRE IS A PERPETUAL FACT IN THE LIFE OF GOD'S PEOPLE. 1. We see the pillar in God's Word. The Bible has not a precept for every emergency which can arise in daily life, so that at such a point you can see a guide-board, like the signs pointing to the old cities of refuge; but it is full of general principles which, if obeyed, will direct without mistake to the promised land. 2. We see the pillar in God's providences. Sometimes it appears in prosperity, beckoning us onward; sometimes in adversity, turning us back. 3. We see the pillar in God's special revelations. They come, perhaps, at the threshold of some great undertaking. Shall we move out from Egypt toward the Red Sea? And there, if we are watching, will be the sign in the sky! When Pastor Harms, in Germany, was deliberating whether, without one dollar in his possession, he should build a ship to carry missionaries to Africa, he says, describing his conflict: "I prayed fervently to the Lord, laid the matter in His hands, and as I rose up at midnight from my knees I said, with a voice that almost startled me in my quiet room, 'Forward now, in God's name.' From that moment there never came a thought of doubt into my mind." Such an experience must, indeed, be interpreted with great care, there is so much danger of delusion. Yet it is true that with a prayerful mind, with diligent study of the Word, especially with the intuitions of a filial spirit, such revelations may be as distinct as any that ever came to Moses. II. THE PILLAR IS A BLESSING ONLY TO THOSE WHO TRUST AND FOLLOW IT. On some sides the Israelites are a poor example for us, but we may learn something from them in this particular: that they followed the pillar. 1. They followed it promptly. Whenever and wherever it moved, then and thither they moved without delay. If it aroused them from their sleep they obeyed with alacrity. It is when the cloud speaks to us "suddenly," unexpectedly, that our obedience is most severely tested. But that is our standard; a mind to run in the way of God's commandments. 2. They followed the pillar constantly (vers. 21, 22). 3. They followed the pillar by faith. They obeyed even when they could not understand. If troubles were only explained they would be so much easier to bear. But the best faith endures without understanding. A generation ago some of us used to hear of an afflicted woman in Connecticut named Chloe Lankton, who, many will be surprised to know, is living still. For fifty-five years she has lain upon her bed and suffered, but without losing her Christian faith. Acknowledging, not long ago, a remittance sent for her support, she wrote: "Jesus only knows how much I endure. He knows it all and supports me. . . . I have a strong arm to lean upon and will trust Him to the end. . . . Oh, how thankful I feel . . . for the many comforts and blessings God gives me!" Poor soul! How long, for her, the cloud has tarried! And she is only one of the great "shut-in-society" who have learned to trust and follow "two days or a month or a year," or a lifetime, if God wills. It would be a mistake, however, to think of this truth as applying

only to the darker side of human experience. It is great joy in the brightest prosperity to see the pillar; and no one has so good a right to live in the sunshine as a Christian. Friendship is joy, home is joy, music is joy, learning is joy. The world is full of such pleasures. But does it not intensify these to realise that they are all signs of the Father's love? Is not the water at Elim more sweet if, as we quench our thirst, we can look up and see the pillar? Then, too, is there not comfort in knowing that if farther on we have cause to apprehend another experience of thirst and suffering, we shall be under the same heavenly presence and can hear the voice out of the cloud? So for all, in every condition and need, the pillar has heavenly blessing. Still we must remember the blessing is only for those who trust and follow. (*T. J. Holmes.*) *The guiding pillar*:—I. THE DOUBLE FORM OF THE GUIDING PILLAR. The fire was the centre, the cloud was wrapped around it. The former was the symbol, making visible to a generation who had to be taught through their senses the inaccessible holiness and flashing brightness and purity of the Divine nature; the latter tempered and veiled the too great brightness for feeble eyes. The same double element is found in all God's manifestations of Himself to men. In every form of revelation are present both the core of light, that no eye can look upon, and the merciful veil which, because it veils, unveils; because it hides, reveals; makes visible because it conceals; and shows God because it is the hiding of His power. So, through all the history of His dealings with men, there has ever been what is called in Scripture language the "face," or the "name of God"; the aspect of the Divine nature on which eye can look; and manifested through it there has always been the depth and inaccessible abyss of that infinite Being. We have to be thankful that in the cloud is the fire, and that round the fire is the cloud. God hides to make better known the glories of His character. So a light, set in some fair alabaster vase, shines through its translucent walls, bringing out every delicate tint and meandering vein of colour, while itself diffused and softened by the enveloping medium which it beautifies by passing through its pure walls. Both are made visible and attractive to dull eyes by the conjunction. He that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father, and he that hath seen the Father in Christ hath seen the man Christ as none see Him who are blind to the incarnate Deity which illuminates the manhood in which it dwells. But we have to note also the varying appearance of the pillar according to need. There was a double change in the pillar according to the hour, and according as the congregation was on the march or encamped. Both these changes of aspect symbolise for us the reality of the Protean capacity of change according to our ever-varying needs, which for our blessing we may find in that ever-changing, unchanging Divine presence which will be our companion if we will. When the deceitful brightness of earth glistens and dazzles around me, my vision of Him may be "a cloudy screen to temper the deceitful ray"; and when "there stoops on our path in storm and shade the frequent night," as earth grows darker, and life becomes grayer and more sombre, and verges to its even, the pillar blazes brighter before the weeping eye, and draws near to the lonely heart. We have a God that manifests Himself in the pillar of cloud by day and in the flaming fire by night.

II. THE GUIDANCE OF THE PILLAR. When it lifts the camp marches; when it glides down and lies motionless the march is stopped and the tents are pitched. The main thing which is dwelt upon in this description of the God-guided pilgrimage of the wandering people is the absolute uncertainty in which they were kept as to the duration of their encampment, and as to the time and circumstances of their march. Is not that all true about us? We have no guiding cloud like this. So much the better. Have we not a more real guide than that? God guides us by circumstances, God guides us by His Word, God guides us by His Spirit, speaking through our common sense and in our understandings, and, most of all, God guides us by that dear Son of His, in whom is the fire and round whom is the cloud. The pillar that we follow, which will glow with the ruddy flame of love in the darkest hours of life, will glide in front of us through the valley of the shadow of death, brightest then when the murky midnight is blackest, nor will that pillar which guides us cease to blaze as did the guide of the desert march when Jordan has been crossed, but it will still move before us on paths of continuous and ever increasing approach to infinite perfection. They who follow Christ afar off and with faltering steps here, shall there "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." In like manner, the same absolute uncertainty which kept on was intended to keep the Israelites (though it failed often) in the attitude of constant dependence, is the condition in which we all have to live, though we mask it from ourselves. That we

do not know what lies before us is a commonplace. The same long tracts of monotonous continuance in the same place, and doing the same duties, befall us that befall these men. Years pass, and the pillar spreads itself out, a defence above the unmoving sanctuary. And then, all of a flash, when we are least thinking of change, it gathers itself together, is a pillar again, shoots upwards and moves forwards; and it is for us to go after it. And so our lives are shuttlecocked between uniform sameness, which may become mechanical monotony, and agitation by change which may make us lose our hold of fixed principles and calm faith, unless we recognise that the continuance and the change are alike the will of the guiding God whose will is signified by the stationary or moving pillar. III. THE DOCTILE FOLLOWING OF THE GUIDE. That is what we have to set before us as the type of our lives—that we should be as ready for every indication of God's will as they were. The peace and blessedness of our lives largely depend on our being eager to obey, and therefore quick to perceive the slightest sign of motion in the resting or of rest in the moving pillar which regulates our march and our encamping. What do we want in order to cultivate and keep such a disposition? We need perpetual watchfulness lest the pillar should lift unnoticed. When Nelson was second in command at Copenhagen, the admiral in command of the fleet hoisted the signal for recall, and Nelson put his telescope to his blind eye and said, "I do not see it." That is very like what we are tempted to do; the signal for unpleasant duties that we want to get out of is hoisted, we are very apt to put the telescope to the blind eye, and pretend to ourselves that we do not see the fluttering flags. We need still more to keep our wills in absolute suspense if His will has not declared itself. Do not let us be in a hurry to run before God. We need to hold the present with a slack hand, so as to be ready to fold our tents and take to the road if God will. We must not reckon on continuance, nor strike our roots so deep that it needs a hurricane to remove us. To those who set their gaze on Christ no present from which He wishes them to remove can be so good for them as the new conditions into which He would have them pass. We need, too, to cultivate the habit of prompt obedience. "I made haste and delayed not to keep Thy commandments" is the only safe motto. It is reluctance which usually puts the drag on, and slow obedience is often the germ of incipient disobedience. In matters of prudence and of intellect second thoughts are better than first, and third thoughts, which often come back to first ones, better than second; but, in matters of duty, first thoughts are generally best. They are the instinctive response of conscience to the voice of God, while second thoughts are too often the objections of disinclination or sloth or cowardice. It is easiest to do our duty when we are first sure of it. It then comes with an impelling power which carries us over obstacles on the crest of a wave, while hesitation and delay leave us stranded in shoal water. If we would follow the pillar we must follow it at once. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The pillar of cloud and fire*:—I. THE ADVANTAGES OF ITS POSSESSION. 1. The distinction it maintains. Only Israel so privileged. Christians, you are a peculiar people, your origin is peculiar, your character is peculiar, your spirit, your desires and affections, the objects of your pursuit. You have peculiar privileges and honours conferred on you. There must be a marked difference between you and the world. 2. The guidance it ensures. Jesus is now the guide of His people. He leads in the way of truth and wisdom. How? (1) By His example. He has gone before us in the path of duty, temptation, and sorrow. By His Word. This is our rule. (2) By His ordinances. He sends His ministers as your guides. (3) By His Spirit effectually. (4) By the leadings of His providence. 3. The protection it affords. God is the Christian's hiding-place. 4. The joy it inspires. God is the source of happiness, the fountain of life. 5. The glory it confers. The presence of God is our highest, best, only real glory. This is the glory of our nation—this is the glory of our churches—this is the glory of our religious assemblies—this is the glory of our families—and this is our individual glory. But what is all that God confers here to what is in reserve? Everything shall be glorious there. II. THE PERPETUITY OF ITS ENJOYMENT. 1. Its necessity. We always need the Divine presence. We are dependent on Him for everything. We need His providential presence and agency to continue us in being and supply our numerous wants; and we require His gracious presence for the maintenance of spiritual life and for the reception of spiritual blessings. 2. The manner in which it is ensured. This may be seen three ways. From what He has done, is doing, and has promised to do. (*E. Temple.*) *Dependence on Divine guidance*:—A more lovely picture of absolute dependence upon, and subjection to, Divine guidance it were impossible to conceive

than that presented here. There was not a footprint or a landmark throughout the "great and terrible wilderness." It was therefore useless to look for any guidance from those who had gone before. They were wholly cast upon God for every step of the way. They were in a position of constant waiting upon Him. This to an unsubdued mind, an unbroken will, would be intolerable; but to a soul knowing, loving, confiding, and delighting in God, nothing could be more deeply blessed. Here lies the real gist of the whole matter. Is God known, loved, and trusted? If He be, the heart will delight in the most absolute dependence upon Him. If not, such dependence would be perfectly insufferable. The unrenewed man loves to think himself independent, loves to fancy himself free, loves to believe that he may do what he likes, go where he likes, say what he likes. Alas; it is the merest delusion. Man is not free. Satan holds the natural man—the unconverted, unrepentant man in terrible bondage. Satan rules man by means of his lusts, his passions, and his pleasures. There is no freedom save that with which Christ makes His people free. He it is who says, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." And again, "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Here is true liberty. It is the liberty which the new nature finds in walking in the Spirit and doing those things that are pleasing in the sight of God. (C. H. Mackintosh.)

The day and the night journey:—We must look to have our portion of the cloud so long as we remain below the skies. It will be the lot of the believer, in the somewhat analogous image of St. Paul, to "see through a glass darkly" so long as he remains in this tabernacle. Possibly a clearer light to our imperfect organs of spiritual vision would only tend to dazzle and obscure. Enough for us to know there is light enough, and that what there is is light from Heaven that cannot lead astray. In following the cloud Israel followed God. In our obedience to the will of God, as expressed in His providence or revealed in His Word, we obey Him too; and the true believer's attachment to and connection with God, is like that which is expressed in the touching and holy plighted troth of marriage—"for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health." I. If the cloud be taken up by day—THAT IS, IF GOD BLESSES A MAN WITH PROSPERITY—it is, in the first place, to make him an eleemosynary ordinance, or MEANS OF USEFULNESS TO OTHERS. It is entrusting him with the "five talents," as compared with the two or the one talent. II. We have to learn, in the second place, THAT DIFFICULTY IS NO GROUND FOR DISPENSING WITH DUTY: "whether it was by day or by night the cloud was taken up, they journeyed." To obey under embarrassment is the more characteristic obedience of a Christian. There are many forms of the night-journey of the pilgrim of Christ. We have considered the day-journey under the illustration of wealth and easy circumstances, or in any other shape of general prosperity; let us meditate upon the night-journey in the shape of poverty, sickness, bereavement, or domestic opposition to the Christian life. (J. B. Owen, M.A.)

The journey of life:—There is no strain upon the imagination in thinking of life as a journey. That is one of the simplest and most beautiful figures by which the action of life can be represented. We are travellers; we are here but for a little time; on our feet are sandals and in our hands are staves; here we have no continuing city, and we are called upon to testify to the age that we seek a country out of sight. So, then, we are familiar with the figure; it commends itself to us, as life enlarges, as quite expressive of the reality of the case—every day a milestone, every year so much nearer the end. Regarding life, then, as a journey, according to the pattern of this text, is there not a mysterious presence or influence in life which really affects our action? In the text that influence is spoken of as a cloud by day and a fire by night—two striking natural images. Our controversy is not about the image or the metaphor; behind it is there not this ever-abiding solemnity, that in life there is a mysterious action—a ministry we cannot comprehend, an influence we cannot overrule? We speak of "impression." When we think of changing our position in life, we say we have an *impression*. What is an impression? Who created it? Who determined its meaning? How do you account for the impression? Upon what is the impression made?—upon the mind, upon something subtler than itself, upon the consciousness, the soul, the spirit—the innermost man. That is a mystery! Or we speak of "circumstances." We say that *circumstances* seem to point in this direction or that. What are circumstances? Where do they begin? How do they sum themselves up into influence or into definiteness? Having spoken about "impression" and "circumstances," we speak about another mysterious thing which has come to be known by the name of "tendency." We say the *tendency* of

things is—; or the *tendency* of life seems to indicate—. We have created a species of rhythm, or harmonic movement, falling into which we say, This is the sweep of tendency, and to resist tendency is impossible. How anxious we are to get rid of religious names! Men who will speak of impression, circumstances, and tendency, will hesitate before saying Providence, God, Father in heaven. Let the Church beware how it gives up the grand old names—God, Providence, heavenly direction, spiritual influence! Why shrink from the definite religious testimony of the eighteenth verse, “At the commandment of the Lord,” &c. When a man rises in the morning in God’s strength, lies down at night in God’s blessing, walks all day in God’s energy, he lives and moves and has his being in God; God is in his inmost thought, and every word upon his tongue is an implied or actual confession of childlike trust in God. We need not be ashamed of this definite testimony. It exalts human life. What is the meaning of it? Evidently that our life is recognised by God, our movements are of some consequence to Him; He knows our down-sitting and our uprising, our going out and our coming in; and there is not a word upon our tongue, there is not a thought in our heart, but lo, it is known wholly in heaven. This consciousness of Divine guidance in life, Divine care of life, Divine redemption of life, necessitates prayer. The man who seizes this view of things must pray. This religious view of life brings the spirit into the restfulness and blessed joy of obedience. The children of Israel simply obeyed. Theirs was not a life of controversy, ours, unhappily, is. We have made it a life of controversy when we need not. We are always arguing with our orders; we are trying to construe them into different and inferior meanings; we are wasting life by discussing in idle words, which can settle nothing, the gravity and authority of our marching orders. If we accept God’s Book, do let us accept it with full trust, not as a field for criticism, but as a code of life—the Word, or the testimony, by which every thought, feeling, and action is to be determined. Live that life and risk your destiny. To obey is to live. (*J. Parker. D.D.*) *The cloud tarrying*:—I. A word of DESCRIPTION. The time “the cloud tarried” was—1. One of rest. 2. One of spiritual activity. 3. Peculiarly a time of temptation. II. A word of EXHORTATION. 1. Be more anxious to keep the cloud in sight than to see it tarry. We are responsible for the one, but not for the other. 2. Be more anxious to improve than to enjoy these refreshing times. 3. Be more anxious to improve than prolong these periods. III. A word of CAUTION. 1. If the cloud tarry long, think not that it will never move. Rest should be the preparation time for exertion. 2. Be not impatient if it tarry when you wish to journey. It does rest sometimes over a desert land. 3. Be ready, that whenever the cloud moves you may be ready to journey. (*R. A. Griffin.*) *The cloud and the tabernacle*:—I. WHY IS THE CHURCH IN OUR DAY SO MUCH OF THE TIME UNDER THE CLOUD, AND SEEMINGLY PUT BACK IN THE PROGRESS OF LONG-CONTINUED REVIVALS OF RELIGION? Sin is the trouble. It took but a few moments to bring it into the world, but it takes ages to get it out. It makes us ignorant, weak, self-reliant, and self-seeking, so that we cannot march long at a time without getting so elated that God must let down the cloud a little while; a day, a month, or a year, as our case may be, to get us ready to march again. It requires great grace and a large measure of previous discipline, and frequent humiliations to keep us feeling and saying, as we go to our work of conquest for Christ, “Not by might, nor by power, but by Thy Spirit, O Lord.” And so, God must often bring us into pecuniary straits, and cut off our men and our means, and cause painful delays, and sad embarrassments, and short triumphs, and unforeseen obstacles, and cloud-falling times, that we may feel our weakness and renew our strength; and, with all our facilities for saving ourselves and the world, that we may just lay ourselves over, with the simplicity of children, upon the supernatural power of God, and the sole guidance of Christ, saying, “Help, Lord, for without Thee we can do nothing.” II. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE PROMINENT DUTIES WHICH GOD REQUIRES FROM US WHILE UNDER THE CLOUD, THAT WE MAY BE READY THE SOONER TO ARISE AND GO FORWARD IN THE MORE ACTIVE DUTIES, AND IN THE MORE JOYFUL EXPERIENCES OF THE REVIVAL DAYS? 1. In general, to be ready for the lifting up of the cloud, that we may go forth in efficient service in revival scenes, we must be diligent in all the ordinary duties of the tabernacle when it is resting. 2. Among the duties which are specially incumbent when the Church is under the cloud we will enumerate those which God has signalled in the history of the tabernacle as those which are at all times essential to the Christian character and life. (1) Christian benevolence, which answers quickly to the voice of God, as stewards of His manifold grace, in liberal and conscientious giving to the various objects of

religious charity which are designed to promote the good of men and the glory of Christ. (2) The ordinary means of grace should be specially improved by the entire membership of the Church as a preparation for seasons of extraordinary effort. It is not by artificial stimulants, occasionally taken, that we gain the compactness of muscle and the strength of frame which fit us for those emergencies which call forth great physical strength. This strength is the slow growth of nutriment habitually taken to satisfy the cravings of hunger and to supply the daily waste of the system. (*E. S. Wright.*) *God's guidance*:—A preacher of the gospel was travelling by steamboat from Chicago to the north of Lake Michigan, and found that at a certain point the course lay through a narrow and difficult channel between several small islands and the shore. The difficulty of advancing here is greatly increased by the fact that a dense fog almost always rests upon the surface of the water. When, therefore, this part of the voyage is reached, a man is sent up to the mast-head where he can see the landmarks on either side rising above the fog, and, though himself out of sight, is able to give directions for steering to those below. Thus the vessel is guided safely through. So our gracious God sits above the clouds of temptation and trial which surround us on earth, and make our voyage through life so perilous, and, seeing all the dangers of the way, He counsels us as to the track of safety. Let us fully trust the guidance of His eye, and boldly proceed as He directs. *A trustworthy guide*:—I trust myself implicitly to the pilots on the ferry-boats. I do not know the tides and currents that change with every trip across the river, but I have no doubt that they know them, and I have never stopped to question them as to how they came by their knowledge. I am satisfied that they are good pilots, for I see them carrying millions of people back and forth between the two cities without accident; and I think that our Brooklyn and New York ferries as they are served are a miracle of safety; and if I put my life, my happiness, all that is dear to me, in the hands of those men because I believe that they know what they can do, and know what they are about, how much more can I put my trust in Jesus Christ, who has, by His deeds, by His death and by His resurrection, manifested Himself as worthy of all trust. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Following the Divine leading*:—I said to an aged minister of much experience, "All the events of my life seem to have been Divinely connected. Do you suppose it is so in all lives?" He answered, "Yes, but most people do not notice the Divine leadings." I stand here this morning to say from my own experience that the safest thing in all the world to do is to trust the Lord. I never had a misfortune or a trial or a disappointment, however excruciating at the time, that God did not make turn out for my good. My one wish is to follow the Divine leading. (*T. De Witt Talmage.*)

CHAPTER X.

VERS. 1-10. Make thee two trumpets of silver.—*The law of the silver trumpets*:—Revelation is to man as a trumpet-call from heaven; hence the prophets are often told to lift up their voices like a trumpet. The human race is a grand army of immortals. The journey of life is a series of marches intended by the Captain of our salvation to terminate in heaven. But whether this journey will be successfully accomplished or not depends upon our faithfulness to the directions of our Divine Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. **1. THE LAW OF THE SILVER TRUMPETS** is the law of the nature, uses, and objects of Divine revelation, when it is seen and felt as the **UTTERANCE OF DIVINE LOVE, AND THE AUTHORISED GUIDE** and director of our journey to heaven. **1.** And here we may remark how appropriate silver is as a correspondence to spiritual wisdom. It is white, brilliant, and precious. So is the spiritual meaning of the Word. Oh, may its sweet and silvery lessons be to us as dearest treasure! To teach us, then, that it is the spiritual sense of Divine revelation which is intended to guide us, guard us, and call us to heaven, the trumpets were made of silver. **2.** They were two in number, but formed of one piece. The whole spirit of the Word is expressive of love to the Lord, and charity to man (*Matt. xxii. 37-40*). To represent this twofold character of the spirit of the Word, then, there were two silver trumpets, not one only. Yet they were both formed out of one piece. For, indeed, the truth that we should love our neighbour comes out from the

grander truth, that we should supremely love the Lord. The Apostle John states this very clearly (1 Eph. iv. 21; 2 Eph. v. 1). Another idea is intimated by this command to make them of one piece; that, namely, of the entire harmony of the spiritual sense of the Word with itself. It is bright and coherent everywhere. It is silver, all of one piece. II. But let us turn now from the composition of the trumpets to *THEIR USE*. 1. They were to be used to call the people to the assemblies (ver. 3). 2. They were to excite to, and direct the journey of the people (vers. 5, 6). 3. They were to be sounded when an enemy appeared in their land to oppress them (ver. 9). 4. They were to be blown on the days of rejoicing (ver. 10). The first use of the trumpets, then, was to call the assemblies to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, there to hear the will and decisions of the Most High. In like manner we are called by the silver trumpets of the Word to assemble together in the name and in the presence of that glorified Divine Man who said (John x. 9). The whole spirit of the Word calls us to worship Him, and to learn of Him (Rev. xix. 10). When we have been to the Lord Jesus Christ in worship, and to learn His will, we shall find the second use of the silver trumpets will be unfolded to us. We must march on. Regeneration is a journey in which we advance from state to state, as from stage to stage in onward travel. We begin in Egypt, we must reach Canaan. The silvery music will call us forward. The import of its sound is this, Arise, for this is not your rest, for the whole land is polluted (Isa. lx. 1). Arise, child of heaven, from the selfishness and darkness in which thou hast been enshrouded. Arise from the slavery and pollution of sin to the glorious liberty of the children of light. Move on. Next we are carried forward to the contemplation of the third use of the trumpets; to sound an alarm when the enemies within the land seek to oppress. We begin our regeneration by forsaking the grosser sins to which we have been accustomed, and we think we have left all that is offensive in the sight of heaven. We think we are wholly given up to God and goodness, and so we shall continue. Alas! we have in this but little conception of the wonderful nature with which we are endowed, or of the extent of the ramifications of evil. Each mind is a world in ruins. The soul is organised more astonishingly even than the body, and each organ or principle is more or less perverted. Were we left to ourselves, we might well turn back in despair, and die. But happily, what is impossible to man is possible with God. He can give us a new nature: He can give us the victory again and again: He can and will protect us. When, then, our internal enemies, the plagues of our own hearts, appear to us, and dispositions which we supposed were for ever done with are met again and again, let us not quail nor be dispirited. With Divine help we shall overcome them, and triumph until the last enemy is overthrown. But the Lord saves us by His Word. This is the lesson intended by the use of the silver trumpets which we are now considering. When, then, selfishness rises up in your lands to oppress you, go to the Divine Word, and hear its holy sound. Let its voice of love and mercy be heard in your spirit like the silvery tones of heavenly trumpets, and by its truth and power you will be saved. The last use of the trumpets was, that they should be blown on the days of solemn rejoicing. On our days of gladness we should see that all our feelings are such as are under the influence of the Holy Word. Were it not for sin, all our days, like those of heaven, would be days of gladness. The purification of our joys, then, is one of the great works of our regeneration. Let us blow with the silver trumpets on our days of gladness, and on our solemn days. There are states, which recur from time to time, of peculiar solemnity, when conscience is more than usually earnest with us: states of self-examination, states of solemn thought, states of recollection of mercies and blessings formerly received, states of self-dedication to high and holy objects; these are our solemn days. The period when we resolved to quit a period of evil, and entered upon our passover, or feast of unleavened bread; when we commenced the reception of the bread of heaven, though as yet to us tasteless, like unleavened bread; then comes the period when faith enables us, under its influence, to bring forth the first-fruits of a harvest of virtues and graces to be repeated for ever; and lastly, the feast of spiritual ingathering comes on, that matured state of the soul when charity rules in the heart, and perfect love casteth out fear. Blow with the silver trumpets over the solemn days. There are minor solemnities connected with the varied events of life which induce in thoughtful minds solemn states: the births, the marriages, and the deaths of those we love, the serious circumstances of our families and our country, all these make solemn days; let the spirit which rules over them be the spirit of love to the Lord, and charity to man. Blow the silver trumpets over the solemn days. There is mention

made also of the beginning of the months, and as there is a perfect correspondence between outward nature and man's spiritual and interior existence, there is a correspondence in this respect also. The months are the times which depend upon the moon; and the moon is the symbol of faith in the soul. As faith has its variations in the soul, sometimes being bright and luminous, at others dim and obscure, its changes are represented by those of the moon. The beginning of a month is therefore the commencement of a new state of faith in the soul, when, after being in obscurity, we enter into clear and holy light on things Divine. The tree of life is said to bear twelve manner of fruits—one for every month; implying that in every state of mind, and in every change of circumstances in our Christian life, we may receive from the Lord within the power of bringing forth the appropriate works of piety and justice. At the beginning of our mental changes, in the attainment of new views on subjects of faith, we should observe that they are in harmony with the essential principles of the spirit of the Word, of love to the Lord, and charity to man. Blow the silver trumpets in the beginning of the months. And, lastly, over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings. Our offerings at this day are all spiritual. Yet are we as truly called upon to make them as were the Jews. Life consists of fixed duties, and free will efforts. Let both be performed in the spirit of devoted self-dedication, under the Divine spirit of the Holy Word. The silver trumpet must sound over our burnt offerings and our sacrifices of peace offerings, that they may be to us a memorial before the Lord our God. In conclusion, let us be grateful for the provision by our adorable Lord of the interior truths of His Word, the silver trumpets of heaven. Let us seek to find them by reading, by thought and meditation, until we have individually realised the promise of our heavenly Father and Saviour, "For iron I will bring silver." When we have acquired the clear perception that all truth hangs upon the two grand laws of love to God and love to man, then let their silvery voice be heard over all the circumstances of our lives. Let them be heard calling us from Sabbath to Sabbath to the public worship of the Lord Jesus Christ—the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Let them be heard directing our attention to Him in our morning and evening devotions. When we have attained light and strength in prayer, they ever call us to march on to progress. Let us go forward with a glowing, firm, and fervent will, and then strengthen and confirm our progress by the light of a full and active intellect. (*J. Bayley, Ph.D.*)

The trumpets of Providence:—The sacred trumpets are still sounded; they still call men to worship, to festival, to battle. If we have lost the literal instrument, we are still, if right-minded, within sound of the trumpets of Providence. We do not now go out at our own bidding; we are, if wise, responding to a Voice, wherever we may be found. Look at the men who are pouring forth in all directions every morning; stand, in imagination, at a point from which you can see all the stations at which men alight; so present the scene to the fancy that you can see every little procession hastening to its given point of departure; then bring on all the processions to the various points of arrival; read the faces of the men; take in the whole scene. What action; what colour; what expression of countenance! And if we had ears acute enough to hear, what various voices are being sounded by every life; what tumult; what desire; what intersection of paths; what imminent collisions!—and yet the whole scene moves on with a kind of rough order all its own. What has called these men together—and yet not together?—the trumpet! Some have heard the trumpet calling to controversy. Many of these men carry bloodless swords; they are well equipped with argument; they are about to state the case, to defend the position, to repel, to assert, to vindicate righteousness, and to claim compensation for virtue outraged; they are soldiers; they have mapped out the battlefield in private; all their forces have been disposed within the sanctuary of the night, and presently the voice of genius and of eloquence will be heard in high wrangling, in noble contention, that so the wicked may claim nothing that is not his own, and the righteous have the full reward of his purity. They are going to the political arena to adjust the competing claims of nations, or causes; war is in their eyes; should they speak, they would speak stridently, with clear, cutting tone, with military precision and emphasis; they would hold no long parley with men, for they mean the issue to end in victory. Others have heard no such trumpet: they have heard another call—to peaceful business, to daily routine, to duty, made heavy often by monotony, but duty still, which must be done according to the paces and beatings of the daily clock. They cannot resist that voice without resisting themselves. And other men, in smaller bands—more aged men—men who have seen service in the market field, in the political field, in the field

of literature—how go they? Away towards sunny scenes, quiet meadows, lakes of silver, gardens trimmed with the patience and skill of love. They are men of leisure, men in life's afternoon. The sunbeam has been a trumpet to them; hearing it, they said, Who would remain at home to-day? All heaven calls us out, the great blue arch invites us to hospitality in the fields and woods, and by the riverside. All men are obeying a trumpet; the call is addressed from heaven to earth every morning. We may have outlived the little, straight, silver trumpet, turned up at the ends; but the trumpet invisible, the trumpet of Providence, the call of Heaven, the awakening strain of the skies—this we cannot outlive: for the Lord is a Man of war, and must have the battle continued: the Lord is a Father, and must have the family constituted in order; the Lord is a Shepherd, and must have the flocks led forth that they may lie down in the shadow of noonday. The trumpets were to be sounded by the priests. The pulpit should be a tower of strength to every weak cause. Were every Sabbath day devoted to the tearing down of some monster evil—were the sanctuary dedicated to the denunciation, not of the vulgar crimes which everybody condemns, but the subtle and unnamed crimes which everybody practises, the blast of the trumpet would tear the temple walls in twain! There are trumpets which call us in spiritual directions. They are heard by the heart. They are full of the tone of persuasion—that highest of all the commandments. The heart hears the trumpet on the Sabbath day. The trumpet that could sound an alarm is softened in its tone into a tender entreaty, or a cheerful persuasion, or a promise of enlarged liberty. Everything depends upon the tone. The trumpet may be the same, but the tone is different. We cannot take up the trumpet of the great player and make it sound as he made it. What is it, then, that plays the trumpet? It is the soul. If we knew things as we ought to know them, we should know that it is the soul that plays every instrument, that sings every hymn, that preaches every discourse that has in it the meaning of God and the behest of Heaven. The same trumpet called to festival and to war; so the gospel has two tones: it calls lovingly, sweetly, tenderly; and it sounds an alarm, making the night tremble through all its temple of darkness, and sending into men's hearts pangs of apprehension and unutterable fear. There is another trumpet yet to sound (1 Cor. xv. 52). The trumpet is not lost, then; it is in heaven, where the Ark of the Testimony is, where the Shekinah is, where the Tabernacle of God is. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The institution of the silver trumpets*:—It sets forth, in the most distinct manner possible, that God's people are to be absolutely dependent upon, and wholly subject to, Divine testimony, in all their movements. A child may read this in the type before us. The congregation in the wilderness dared not assemble for any festive or religious object until they heard the sound of the trumpet; nor could the men of war buckle on their armour, till summoned forth by the signal of alarm to meet the uncircumcised foe. They worshipped and they fought, they journeyed and they halted, in simple obedience to the trumpet call. It was not, by any means, a question of their likings or dislikings, their thoughts, their opinions, or their judgment. It was simply and entirely a question of implicit obedience. Their every movement was dependent upon the testimony of God, as given by the priests from the sanctuary. The song of the worshipper and the shout of the warrior were each the simple fruit of the testimony of God. The silver trumpet settled and ordered every movement for Israel of old. The testimony of God ought to settle and order everything for the Church now. That silver trumpet was blown by the priests of old. That testimony of God is known in priestly communion now. A Christian has no right to move or act apart from Divine testimony. He must wait upon the word of his Lord. Till he gets that, he must stand still. When he has gotten it he must go forward. It is not by aught that strikes the senses that our Father guides us; but by that which acts on the heart, the conscience, and the understanding. It is not by that which is natural, but by that which is spiritual, that He communicates His mind. If the ear is circumcised, you will assuredly hear the silver trumpet. Till that sounds, never stir: when it sounds, never tarry. This will make all so clear, so simple, so safe, so certain. It is the grand cure for doubt, hesitancy, and vacillation. It will save us from the necessity of running for advice to this one and that one, as to how we should act, or where we should go. And, furthermore, it will teach us that it is none of our business to attempt to control the actions or movements of others. Let each one have his ear open, and his heart subject, and then, assuredly, he will possess all the certainty that God can give him, as to his every act and movement, from day to day. Our ever gracious God can give clearness and decision as to everything. If He does not give it, no one can. If He does,

no one need. (*C. H. Mackintosh.*) *The silver trumpets*:—The silver trumpets sent a piercing note. So should the gospel herald utter aloud the gospel news. Away with timid whisper, and a stammering tongue. Note, the trumpets were of one piece. So is the gospel message. It knows no mixture. Christ is all. No diverse metal soiled these trumpets. No intermingling error should soil pulpits. The type, moreover, fixes attention on the Christian as a worshipper—a pilgrim—a warrior—a son of joy. For let the occasions on which these trumpets sounded be now more closely marked. 1. They call the people to God's sanctuary. It is a gospel ordinance that worshippers should throng the holy courts—that public prayer and praise should reverence the glorious name. 2. They give command to march. The Bible warns that earth is not our rest. We live a stranger-life. We occupy a moving tent. We hold a pilgrim-staff. 3. They sound for war. The life of faith is one incessant fight. Beneath the cross a sword is drawn, of which the scabbard is cast far away. Until the victor's crown is won, unflinching combat must go on. 4. In the grand feasts they cheer the worshippers around the bleeding victims. While the altar streams, and happy crowds look on, the heavens resound with these exulting clangs. The precept is obeyed (*Psa. lxxi. 1.*). Believer, thus, too, the gospel teaches you to joy—to joy with heart abounding with melodious praise, when you in faith contemplate, and in worship plead, the meritorious death of Christ. (*Dean Law.*) *The silver trumpets, or the relation of the gospel ministry to the seasons and services of the Christian life*:—1. The trumpets and their use were commanded by God. He blesses men, saves men by the use of the means which He has appointed. 2. The trumpets were to be blown by the priests. Every Christian is now a priest, but the ministers of the gospel are especially the heralds of the Divine messages. 3. The trumpets were to be blown in accordance with clear and well-understood instructions. When they were to blow one trumpet only, and when they were to blow both; when the short, sharp, broken notes, and when the long and continuous peal—these things were clearly explained and enjoined. There was to be no uncertainty as to the meaning of the signals. The meaning of the sounds of the gospel trumpet should be equally and unmistakably clear (*1 Cor. xiv. 7, 8.*) 4. The trumpets were to be blown at different seasons and for different purposes—for conventions, for journeyings, for battles, for festivals, &c. In this we have an illustration of the relation of the gospel ministry to the seasons and services of the Christian life. We proceed to offer some hints on the analogy. The silver trumpets were used—**I. FOR THE CALLING OF ASSEMBLIES.** The ministry of the gospel should draw men together, even as the silver trumpets convened the assemblies of Israel. **II. FOR SUMMONING THE PEOPLE TO ADVANCE.** The Christian minister is required to summon the people to arise and “go forward” in their upward pilgrimage. He summons them to advance—1. In personal holiness. He exhorts them to “follow on to know the Lord,” to “grow in grace,” to “forget those things which are behind,” &c. (*Phil. iii. 13, 14.*) 2. In personal and collective usefulness. He should incite both individuals and Churches to more diligent and devoted services in the cause of Christ. **III. FOR ENCOURAGING THE PEOPLE IN BATTLE.** Like the priests with the silver trumpets the minister of the gospel should—1. Encourage Christians to battle against evil. 2. By inciting them to trust in God. He gives the victory. **IV. FOR SUITABLY OBSERVING SEASONS OF SPECIAL INTEREST.** 1. Seasons of joy. “In the days of your gladness ye shall blow with the trumpets,” &c. The gospel aims at the consecration and promotion of human gladness. “That My joy might remain in you, and your joy might be full.” “Rejoice in the Lord alway.” “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” “Believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” The gospel forbids no pure delight, but hallows and increases it. 2. Seasons of solemnity. “In your solemn days ye shall blow with the trumpets,” &c. There are many solemn days in life—days of mental conflict, of spiritual darkness, of social bereavement, &c. In such days the hopeful and helpful sounds of the gospel trumpet are peculiarly precious. 3. Closing and commencing seasons. “And in the beginnings of your months ye shall blow,” &c. (*W. Jones.*) *The silver trumpets*:—We have here directions concerning the public notices that were to be given to the people upon several occasions—by sound of trumpet. In a thing of this nature one would think Moses needed not to have been taught of God, his own reason might teach him the convenience of trumpets; but their constitution was to be in everything Divine, and therefore even in this matter, as small as it seems. Moses is here directed—**I. ABOUT THE MAKING OF THEM.** They must be made of silver; not cast, but of beaten work (as some read it); the matter and

shape no doubt very fit for the purpose. He was now ordered to make but two, because there were but two priests to use them; but in Solomon's time we read of an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets (2 Chron. v. 12). The form of these trumpets is supposed to be much like ours of this day. II. WHO WERE TO MAKE USE OF THEM. Not any inferior person; but the priests themselves, the sons of Aaron (ver. 8). As great as they were, they must not think it a disparagement to them to be trumpeters in the house of God; the meanest office there was honourable. This signified that the Lord's ministers should lift up their voice like a trumpet, to show people their sins (Isa. lviii. 1), and to call them to Christ (Isa. xxvii. 13). III. UPON WHAT OCCASIONS THE TRUMPETS WERE TO BE SOUNDED. 1. For the calling of assemblies (ver. 2). Thus they are bid to blow the trumpet in Zion, for the calling of a solemn assembly together, to sanctify a fast (Joel ii. 13). Public notice ought to be given of the time and place of religious assemblies, for the invitation to the benefit of ordinances in general. "Whoever will, let him come." Wisdom cries in the chief places of concourse. But that the trumpet might not give an uncertain sound, they are directed, if only the princes and elders were to meet, to blow only one of the trumpets; less should serve to call them together who ought to be examples of forwardness in anything that is good. But if the body of the people were to be called together, both the trumpets must be sounded, that they might be the farther heard. In allusion to this, they are said to be blessed that hear the joyful sound (Psa. lxxxix. 15), *i.e.*, that are invited and called upon to wait upon God in public ordinances (Psa. cxiii. 1). And the general assembly at the great day will be summoned by the sound of the archangel's trumpet (Matt. xxiv. 34). 2. For the journeying of the camps; to give notice when each squadron must move, for no man's voice could reach to give the word of command. Soldiers with us, that are well disciplined, may be exercised by beat of drum. When the trumpets were blown for this purpose they must sound an alarm (ver. 5), a broken, quavering, interrupted sound, which was proper to excite and encourage the minds of people in the marches against their enemies; whereas a continued equal sound was more proper for the calling of the assembly together (ver. 7). Yet when the people were called together to deprecate God's judgments we find an alarm sounded (Joel ii. 3). At the first sounding, Judah's squadron marched; at the second, Reuben's; at the third, Ephraim's; at the fourth, Dan's (vers. 5, 6). And some think this was intended to sanctify their marches; for this was proclaimed by the priests, who were God's mouth to the people, not only the Divine orders given them to move, but the Divine blessing upon them in all their motions. He that hath ears let him hear that God is with them of a truth. 3. For the animating and encouraging of their armies when they went out to battle (ver. 9). "If ye go to war blow with the trumpets"; signifying thereby your appeal to Heaven, for the decision of the controversy, and your prayer to God to give you victory; and God will own this His own institution, and you shall be remembered before the Lord your God. God will take notice of this sound of the trumpet, and be engaged to fight their battles; and let all the people take notice of it, and be encouraged to fight His; as David, when he heard a sound of a going upon the tops of the mulberry-trees. Not that God needed to be awaked by sound of trumpet, no more than Christ needed to be awaked by His disciples in the storm (Matt. viii. 25), but where He intends mercy it is His will that we should solicit for it. Ministers must stir up the good soldiers of Jesus Christ to fight manfully against sin, the world, and the devil, by assuring them that Christ is the Captain of their salvation, and will tread Satan under their feet. 4. For the solemnising of their sacred feasts (ver. 10). One of their feasts was called the feast of trumpets (Lev. xxiii. 23, 24). And it should seem they were thus to grace the solemnity of all their feasts (Psa. lxxxi. 3), and their sacrifices (2 Chron. xxix. 27), to intimate with what joy and delight they performed their duty to God, and to raise the minds of those that attend the services to a holy triumph in the God they worshipped. And then their performances were for a memorial before God; for then He takes pleasure in our religious exercises when we take pleasure in them. Holy work should be done with holy joy. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*) *Significance of the silver trumpet*.—It is the voice of Him who came preaching peace, the proclamation of those of whom the prophet speaks (Isa. lii. 7). For just as the two silver trumpets entered into every part of Israel's life, and their varied notes were always adapted to Israel's wants and position, so it is with the gospel. Its awakening power, its soothing promises, its sanctifying influence, is meant to consecrate every act of our lives, and move every thought of our hearts. Did the sound of the silver trumpets call the slothful or backsliding Israel to the tabernacle

of the congregation, either to hear the will of God announced by Moses, or to worship? So does the voice of Jesus in the gospel invite us into the presence of God. It says to the slumbering heart, "Awake, thou that sleepest," &c. It says to the fearful and desponding, "Come boldly unto the throne of grace," &c. It says to the backsliding and to the guilty conscience, "Return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thy iniquity." It says, again, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock," &c. Did the sound of the silver trumpets bid Israel arise and follow the pillar of fire and cloud which went before them? So does the voice of Jesus bid us arise and journey onward. When our hearts are entangled by the secret influences of the world—when we begin to take up our rest in the love of the creature—then there is a still small voice full of warning, "Arise ye, and depart, for this is not your rest; it is polluted." Whosoever we rest contented with low attainments, losing sight of Him to whose image we ought to be conformed, the silver trumpets sound, bidding us press toward the mark for the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus. As, too, Israel of old was called to engage in warfare with their enemies and God's, and one use of the silver trumpets was to summon them to preparation and to the field of battle, so has the Israel of God now a great conflict to engage in—a conflict with enemies seen and unseen, and the unseen more powerful than the seen. Yet, how seldom do we realise as we ought the greatness of the conflict, and the power of our spiritual enemies! and, consequently, we are too often off our guard. Hence it is that the silver trumpets are needed to summon us to the conflict. We require to be summoned to "endure hardness," as good soldiers of Christ Jesus (2 Tim. ii. 3), that we may not, like Israel of old, turn back in the day of battle, but may feel and exclaim with David (Psa. xviii. 32, 34, 35). And, once more, were the silver trumpets needed to consecrate all Israel's offerings, that they might be a memorial before the Lord? Oh, still more is it the gospel of Christ that does and can consecrate all acts of life and of worship! It is the word, too, of the gospel which explains to us the means of approach to God, and, still more, prepares our hearts for that communion. We should listen to the sound of the silver trumpet in every act of life, in every prayer, and over every offering. With this everything will become a memorial before the Lord. (*G. Wagner.*) *The trumpet gospel*:—One of the good doctors whom I often heard in my boyhood had a voice like the distant rolling of thunder. He exchanged pulpits with a neighbour, whose voice was peculiarly effeminate. It was a little voice, and withal quite musical. The doctor returned to his own congregation for the evening service. Arising in his place, he commenced with this preface, "My friends, you have to-day heard the gospel through a silver trumpet; but to-night you must hear it through a ram's horn." Alas! how many are charmed with the silver trumpet! Sweet morsels, drops of honey-dew, like globules of sugar-coated opiates, form the only compound suited to their taste. "Peel it, pare it, smooth it, trim it!" is their cry; "take away from it those distorted and hideous features! Fashion it, form it, compound with it some thrilling narrative, some pleasant story, and we will receive it." In other words, make it anything but the plain simple gospel, and it may become palatable. We have advanced to a strange pass in our tastes touching the gospel of the Son of God. (*Buffalo Christian Advertiser.*)

Vers. 11–13. Took their journeys out of the wilderness.—*Israel's journey through the wilderness an emblem of the Christian's state on earth*:—While we are in this world we are passing through a wilderness, and our removes in it are only from one wilderness to another. The men of this world will dislike the comparison because the world is their portion, their all. But those whose chief business and governing desire is to get to heaven, and who have their conversation there, will acknowledge the emblem to be just, will dwell on it with pleasure, and derive instruction from it. This world is like a wilderness, as—1. It is an uncomfortable state. 2. It is a dangerous state: dangerous to the Christian's virtue and peace, to the life and health of his soul, which are the main things that he regards and pursues. 3. It is an unsettled state, subject to continual changes and alterations. We enter on new relations in life, and promise ourselves much from them, but still it is a wilderness: if we have new pleasures we have new cares and sorrows, and if we double our joys we double our griefs too. In every stage of the wilderness we leave some of our friends behind us, the prey of the universal destroyer death, and we find the rest of the journey more tiresome and dangerous for want of their assistance and company. Some are confined long in the wilderness, beyond the usual period of human life. Sometimes they think themselves near the country for

which they are bound, and then, like Israel, they are turned back again, and have many more years to wander. Their burdens grow heavier and their pleasures less, and nothing in the wilderness can support them; nothing but religion and the hope of getting to Canaan at last. Application: 1. Let us be thankful that we have so many comforts in the wilderness. 2. Let us be patient and contented under the evils of it. And for this plain reason, because it is sin that hath turned the world into a wilderness. 3. Let us earnestly seek and hope for the presence of God with us in this wilderness, and that will be everything to us. 4. Let us rejoice in the views of the heavenly Canaan, and diligently prepare for it. (*J. Orton.*)

The cloud rested.—*The resting and the rising of the good*:—I. THE PEOPLE OF GOD ARE SOMETIMES CALLED TO REMAIN, AS IT WERE, STATIONARY FOR A TIME IN THIS LIFE. II. THOUGH THE PEOPLE OF GOD MAY APPEAR TO REMAIN STATIONARY FOR A TIME, YET THERE IS NO PERMANENT SETTLEMENT IN THIS WORLD. III. BOTH THE RESTINGS AND THE RISINGS OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD ARE ORDERED BY HIM. IV. THE PEOPLE OF GOD, WHETHER RESTING OR MARCHING, ARE PROTECTED BY HIM. Learn, in conclusion, to—1. Gratefully appreciate and diligently use the seasons of quiet rest in life. 2. Remember that, however long and grateful a rest may be granted unto us, we are only pilgrims here. Be ready to arise and depart when the cloud arises. 3. Follow the guidance of God. 4. Trust the protection of God. (*W. Jones.*)

Rest a while:—"Rest a while!" Why, it is a mother's word; she says to her little weary child who has toddled itself out of breath, "Rest a while." It is the word of a great, generous, noble-hearted leader of men. He says, "My company must have rest. I know I am sent to gain victories and to work great programmes; but in the meantime my over-worked men must have rest." It is a gentle word. Where do you find such gentleness as you find in Jesus Christ? (*J. Parker, D.D.*)

Rest time not waste time:—It is economy to gather fresh strength. Look at the mower on the summer's day, with so much to cut down ere the sun sets. He pauses in his labour—is he a sluggard? He looks for his stone, and begins to draw it up and down his scythe with rink-a-tink, rink-a-tink, rink-a-tink—is that idle music? Is he wasting precious moments? How much he might have mown while he has been ringing out those notes on his scythe! But he is sharpening his tool, and he will do far more when once again he gives his strength to those long sweeps which lay the grass prostrate in rows before him. Even thus a little pause prepares the mind for greater service in the good cause. Fishermen must mend their nets, and we must every now and then repair our mental waste and set our machinery in order for future service. To tug the oar from day to day, like a galley-slave who knows no holidays, suits not mortal men. Mill-streams go on and on for ever, but we must have our pauses and our intervals. Who can help being out of breath when the race is continued without intermission? Even beasts of burden must be turned out to grass occasionally; the very sea pauses at ebb and flow; earth keeps the Sabbath of the wintry months; and man, even when exalted to be God's ambassador, must rest or faint; must trim his lamp or let it burn low; must recruit his vigour or grow prematurely old. It is wisdom to take occasional furlough. In the long run we shall do more by sometimes doing less. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 14-28. The standard of the camp.—*The Divine standard to be maintained*:—There are few things in which we are more prone to fail than in the maintenance of the Divine standard when human failure has set in. Like David, when the Lord made a breach upon Uzza, because of his failure in putting his hand to the ark, "He was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God home to me?" (1 Chron. xiii. 12). It is exceedingly difficult to bow to the Divine judgment, and, at the same time, to hold fast the Divine ground. The temptation is to lower the standard, to come down from the lofty elevation, to take human ground. We must ever carefully guard against this evil, which is all the more dangerous as wearing the garb of modesty, self-distrust, and humility. Aaron and his sons, notwithstanding all that had occurred, were to eat the meat offering in the holy place. They were to do so, not because all had gone on in perfect order, but "because it is thy due," and "so I am commanded." Though there had been failure, yet their place was in the tabernacle; and those who were there had certain "dues" founded upon the Divine commandment. Though man had failed ten thousand times over, the word of the Lord cannot fail: and that word had secured certain privileges for all true priests, which it was their place to enjoy. Were God's priests to have nothing to eat, no priestly food, because failure had set in? Were those that were left to be allowed to starve, because Nadab and Abihu had offered "strange fire"? 2

This would never do. God is faithful, and He can never allow any one to be empty in His blessed presence. The prodigal may wander, and squander, and come to poverty; but it must ever hold good that "in my Father's house is bread enough and to spare." (*C. H. Mackintosh.*) *God would have order observed among His people at all times:*—When Christ our Saviour intended to feed the multitude that had continued with Him to hear His word, He commanded His disciples to make all sit down in ranks by hundreds and fifties (Mark vi. 40), so that He would have all things, even the most common, done in order. For all disorder came into the world by Satan, and his chief employment is to make a breach into that order which God hath established. He shuffleth and mingleth all together, and seeketh to disturb and destroy what he can, and how he can. Again, order is a means to preserve every society; the want of it threateneth ruin to every society. This serveth, first, to reprove such as keep not their places, but break out of order, and will not be held within the compass that God hath set them. Every man hath his bounds set him, and is enclosed in them as in a circle, which he may not pass. No man hath any promise of blessing when he keepeth not the order God hath set him. Secondly, acknowledge from hence that the Church is a blessed company, it is the very school of good order, wherein all things are done in number, weight, and measure. When Balaam had seen the goodly order of this host of God, as the valleys that were spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees which the Lord had planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters, he cried out in admiration of this comely, decent, and seemly order, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob! and thy tabernacles, O Israel!" For who is it that ruleth in the Church? and who is it by whom it is guided? Is it not God, who is the God of order? No confusion cleaveth or can cleave to Him, He is not the God of confusion, He is light, and in Him is no darkness at all (1 John i. 5). He hath set an order among all His works. Thirdly, when we see this order interrupted in the works of God, know that it cometh not of God. Acknowledge therein the corruption of man and the work of Satan. Fourthly, whensoever we cannot sound the depth of God's works nor judge of them as we ought, when we see to our appearance much out of square, as soldiers out of their squadrons, we must not condemn the works of God, but accuse our own blindness and ignorance, "Forasmuch as God hath made all beautiful in his season" (Eccles. iii. 11). When we behold how the wicked prosper for the most part, and are of great power (Psa. xxxvii. 35), and on the other side the godly all the day long plagued and chastened every morning (Psa. lxxiii. 14), we are ready to misjudge and misdeem of these works of God. Howbeit, the ways of God are not as our ways. This is therefore our weakness in judgment. Thus also was Jeremy troubled (Jer. xii. 1, 2), and no less the prophet Habbakuk (Hab. i. 13). This which we esteem to be a confusion is indeed no confusion; and that is in order which we suppose to be out of order. For God is a God of long suffering, who "Will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserveth wrath for His enemies" (Nah. i. 2), and therefore is the prophet (much perplexed in spirit) willed to wait by faith the issue that God will make, "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry" (Hab. ii. 3). Lastly, from hence every man must learn to do the duties of his own calling. God hath set every man in a certain calling. We are apt, indeed, to break out into the callings of other men, as if we were pinned up in too narrow a room. This made Solomon to say, "I have seen servants on horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth." And as God hath set every man in a calling, so must every man wait and attend upon that calling, whether it be in the Church, or in the family, or in the commonwealth. (*W. Attersoll.*)

Vers. 29-32. *Moses said unto Hobab, . . . Come thou with us.—A generous proposal:*—I. First, then, WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A TRUE CHURCH AS IT IS PICTURED BY ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS? We might prolong the answer to this question with many minute features, but it will be unnecessary to do more than give you a simple broad outline. 1. The people in the wilderness were a redeemed people. They had been redeemed by blood and redeemed by power. So, all the true members of God's Church understand what the blood of sprinkling means. They have enjoyed a passover through it. And the Holy Spirit has entered into their hearts, and made them hate their former sins, has delivered them from the dominant power of their inward corruptions, has set them free and brought them out of the bondage of sin. Thus they have also been redeemed by power, and no one has any right to think himself a member of Christ's Church unless by faith he has

seen himself redeemed by blood, and in his experience has also been redeemed by the power of the Holy Spirit. 2. The Israelites were a people who were passing through a land wherein they found no rest, neither did they desire any, for they were journeying to another country, the promised land, the Canaan. Now, here is another description of the true Church of God. They are not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world. This is not their rest. Here they have no continuing city. 3. Israel in the wilderness was a people walking by faith as to the future, for if you remember, the words are, "They were going to the place of which the Lord said, I will give it to you." And such are God's people now. As for joys to come, they have not tasted them, but they are looking for them, because God has promised them. 4. These people, also, as to their present circumstances were walking by faith. It was not merely faith which sang to them of Canaan, but it was faith that told them of the manna which fell day by day, and the water which flowed from the rock, which stream followed them in their journeyings. So also in this world the Christian man has to live by faith upon God as to present things. As to temporal necessities he must cast all his care on Him who careth for us, but especially as to all spiritual supplies the Christian has no stock of grace. 5. These people found, wherever they went, that they were surrounded by foes. So will you find it if you are a child of God. All places are full of snares. Events, prosperous or adverse, expose you to temptation. All things that happen to you, though God makes them work for good, in themselves would work for evil. While here on this earth the world is no friend to grace to help you on to God. II. IT IS THE DUTY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH TO INVITE SUITABLE PERSONS TO JOIN WITH IT. 1. As you read—"Come thou with us, and we will do thee good"—say if these are not the terms in which any Church should invite a suitable pastor to unite with it? 2. Take the words as significant of the manner in which Churches should invite suitable persons to come among them as private members. Are there not those who go in and out merely as visitors worshipping with you, who have never joined hands with you in covenant? They meet with you as mere hearers, under the same ministry, but they have not identified themselves with the brotherhood to sit down and feast with you at the table of the Lord. To such as these the proposal may be made, and the welcome proffered. 3. Let me call your attention to a certain sense in which Christian men may address this invitation to all that they meet with, "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good." Not "come and join our Church," not "come and be members," not "come and put on a profession of faith." You cannot say that to any but to those in whom you see the fruits of the Spirit, but you may say, and you ought to say, to all persons of all classes on all sides, "Come away from the seed of evil doers, cast in your lot with the people of God; leave the world, come on pilgrimage to the better country; forsake the pursuit of vanities, lay hold on eternal life; waste not all your thoughts upon the bootless cares of time, think about the momentous matters of eternity. Why will you be companions of those who are upon the wrong side, and whose cause is the cause of evil? Why will you remain an enemy to God? We, by God's grace, have cast in our lot with Christ and with His cause; we desire to live to His glory. Come and cast in your lot with us—that is, believe; that is, trust a Saviour slain; that is, put your soul into the custody of Christ the Intercessor; that is, press forward through a life of holiness on earth to a home of happiness in heaven. "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good." III. THE MAIN ARGUMENT—THE MOST POWERFUL INCENTIVE WE CAN EVER USE IS—THAT ASSOCIATION WITH THE CHURCH OF CHRIST WILL DO THOSE WHO ENTER IT GOOD. I am sure it will, for I speak from experience; and if I were to call upon many hundreds in this house they would all bear the same testimony, that union with the people of God has done them good. 1. The Church of God may say this, first, because she can offer to those who join with her good company. 2. "Come with us," the Church of God may say, "and you shall have good instruction," for it is in the true Church of God that the doctrines of grace are preached, the Person of Christ is extolled, the work of the Spirit is magnified, &c. 3. "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good," in the best sense, for thou shalt feel in our midst the good presence of God. 4. "Come with us" again, for you shall participate in all the good offices of the Church. That is to say, if thou wilt cast in thy lot with us, if there be prayer thou shalt have thy share in it. We will pray for thee in thy trouble, and trial, and anguish. 5. But the good that Hobab was to get was not only on the road. The main good he got was this—he went into the promised land with God's people. So, the main blessing that you get from being united with the invisible Church of Christ, through being part and parcel of the body of Christ, is

reserved for the hereafter. IV. Lest we should be found mere pretenders, LET ALL OF US WHO BELONG TO CHRIST'S CHURCH TAKE CARE TO MAKE THIS ARGUMENT TRUE. I speak to many who have long been joined to the visible Church of God, and I put this interrogatory to them—How have you carried out this silent compact which has been made with the friends of Christ? You have promised to do them good; have you fulfilled your pledges? I am afraid few of us have done good to our fellow Christians up to the measure that we might have done, or that we ought to have done. Some professors, I fear, have forgotten the compact altogether. (C. H. Spurgeon.) *True pilgrim life*.—I. The life of all is a pilgrimage. (1) Life as a journey is constant. There is no pausing a moment; whether asleep or awake we are moving on. (2) It is irretaceable. We cannot go back a step. (3) It is resistless. 2. But whilst the life of all is a pilgrimage, all are not taking the same course, and moving to the same destination. Morally there is a true and a false pilgrimage. We take the text to illustrate the life of a true pilgrim. I. It is A LIFE TO A GLORIOUS DESTINY. The true Canaan of humanity is moral perfection. The true soul marches on through life not in quest of some outward good, as did the Israelites of old, but in quest of holiness. 1. It is the gift of God. 2. It is a motive for exertion. II. It is A LIFE OF SOCIAL BENEVOLENCE. 1. The language of a true life is that of invitation. "Come with us." 2. The spirit of a true life is that of kindness. "We will do thee good." III. It is A LIFE UNDER THE BENEDICTION OF HEAVEN. God has spoken good concerning all the holy and the true; all who are the genuine disciples of His Blessed Son. What has He said to them? 1. That they are His friends. 2. That He is always with them. 3. That He has mansions prepared for them in the future. (Homilist.) *The journey to heaven*.—I. THE CHRISTIAN'S DESTINATION. He is not at home on earth, but is a stranger and a pilgrim. He desires something better, and this desire is not to be disappointed. Heaven is something promised. The prospect is delightful. II. THE CHRISTIAN'S JOURNEY. Heaven is not only a place we desire, but one to which we are rapidly advancing. Travelling does not mean a quiescent state of ease and rest; it means active exertion. The different stages of Christian life do not represent simply advancing age, but the attainment of higher degrees of Christian character and perfection. III. THE CHRISTIAN'S DESIRE—that others should accompany him. More especially is this the case as regards relations and friends. It is his duty to invite them. It is part of his Christian work. Well may he be eloquent when a matter of so grave importance is in the balance. Let us seek company as we journey to heaven. It will be better for us here and hereafter. (Preacher's Analyst.) *The believer's journey*.—I. THE PLACE OF EVERY TRUE BELIEVER'S DESTINATION. II. THE MEANS HE IS ADOPTING TO ARRIVE AT IT. III. THE CALL WHICH HE WOULD FAIRLY ADDRESS TO ALL HIS UNCONVERTED NEIGHBOURS. (A. Roberts, M.A.) *Moses and Hobab*.—The historian does not think it worth while to tell whether Moses' attempt to secure the help of a pair of sharp Bedouin eyes succeeded or failed, but passes on to describe at once how "the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them to search out a resting-place for them," and how "the cloud was upon them when they went out of the camp." He would teach us that it mattered little whether Israel had Hobab or not, if they had the ark and the cloud. I. THERE ARE TIMES AND MOODS IN WHICH OUR FORWARD LOOK BRINGS WITH IT A PAINFUL SENSE OF THE UNKNOWN WILDERNESS BEFORE US. It is a libel on God's goodness to speak of the world as a wilderness. He has not made it so; and if anybody finds that "all is vanity and vexation of spirit," it is his own fault. But still one aspect of life is truly represented by that figure. There are dangers and barren places, and a great solitude in spite of love and companionship, and many marchings and lurking foes, and grim rocks, and fierce suns, and parched wells, and shadeless sand wastes enough in every life to make us quail often and look grave always when we think of what may be before us. Who knows what we shall see when we top the next hill, or round the shoulder of the cliff that bars our way? What shout of an enemy may crash in upon the sleeping camp; or what stifling gorge of barren granite—blazing in the sun and trackless to our feet—shall we have to march through to-day? II. We have here an illustration of THE WEAKNESS THAT CLINGS TO HUMAN GUIDES. There are a thousand ways in which our poor weak hearts cry out in their sense-bound unbelief for visible stays to lean upon, and guides to direct us. In so far as that is a legitimate longing, God, who never "sends mouths, but He sends meat to feed them," will not leave us to cry unheard. But let us guard against that ever-present weakness which clings tremblingly to creatures and men for help and guidance, and, in proportion as it is rich when it possesses them, trembles at the prospect

of losing them, and is crushed and desolate when they go. Do not put them as barriers between you and God, nor yield your own clearness of vision to them, nor say to any, "Be to us instead of eyes," nor be over anxious to secure any Hobab to show you where to camp or how to march. III. The contrast which is brought into prominence by the juxtaposition of this section and that which follows it, MAKES EMPHATIC THE THOUGHT OF THE TRUE LEADER OF OUR MARCH. God always goes before His people. No doubt in all our lives there come times when we seem to have been brought into a blind alley, and cannot see where we are to get out; but it is very rare indeed that we do not see one step in advance, the duty which lies next us. And be sure of this, that if we are content to see but one step at a time, and take it, we shall find our way made plain. The river winds, and often we seem on a lake without an exit. Then is the time to go half-speed, and, doubtless, when we get a little farther, the overlapping hills on either bank will part, and the gorge will open out. We do not need to see it a mile off; enough if we see it when we are close upon it. It may be as narrow and grim, with slippery black cliffs towering on either side of the narrow ribbon of the stream, as the cañons of American rivers, but it will float our boat into broader reaches and onward to the great sea. Do not seek to outrun God's guidance, to see what you are to do a year hence, or to act before you are sure of what is His will; do not let your wishes get in advance of the pillar and the ark, and you will be kept from many a mistake, and led into a region of deep peace. IV. OUR CRAVING FOR A HUMAN GUIDE HAS BEEN LOVINGLY MET IN THE GIFT OF CHRIST. His life is our pattern. Our marching orders are brief and simple: follow your Leader, and plant your feet in His footprints. That is the sum of all ethics, and the *vade mecum* for practical life. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *An earnest entreaty*.—I. CHRISTIANITY IS AN ELEVATING FORCE, FILLING THE SOUL WITH PURITY AND LOVE. In this text it is exhibited in all the charms of its simplicity and power. "Come with us, and we will do thee good." On a cold day one autumn I happened to be speaking to a farmer where three roads met, and we saw sitting in the hedge side a half-starved melancholy man, to whom we said, "You look pale and ill, my friend." He replied, "My wife and children are in the workhouse. I have sought work up and down in Manchester and have failed to find it. One has told me to go there, another to go yonder; and I came out here to see if any farmer might perhaps find me work in his fields." The good man at my side clapped his hand on the poor fellow's shoulder and said, "Come with me; I will give you some breakfast and then I will find you work to do." That kindly invitation and promise is an inspiration of Christianity. It is not "Go here," or "go there"; but "come with us, and we will do you good." We need a human sympathy that shall prompt us to do to others as we would have them do to us. We should imagine the feelings of others, and treat them as we should like to be treated ourselves were we in their position. II. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS AN INVITATION. Is not the Christian like the sun that shines away the darkness? The petals of the flowers are closed up during the night, but when the sun shines upon them they open themselves to receive from his rays beauty and fragrance. So the Christian is a clear shining light in the night of the fog of sin. Even as Christ was the light of the world, so is every Christian a brilliancy. 1. Come first with us to the bar of conviction. 2. Come with us to the door of repentance. 3. Come with us to the seat of mercy. 4. Come with us, and we will lead you to the fountain for uncleanness. 5. Come with us to the Cross. 6. Come with us to the marriage of the Lamb with your soul. III. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A TRACKWAY OF BENEFICENCE. "We will do thee good." The Christian shall be doing good all the days of his life. Let Christians join themselves in a huge co-operative society for beneficence. And, sinners, come with us, and we will do you good. Come and help us to help each other. (*W. Birch.*) *The heavenly Canaan*.—I. THE GREAT OBJECT WHICH IS SOUGHT BY THE CHURCH OF GOD. We are seeking heaven, and its perfect felicity we hope ultimately to realise. II. THE INVITATION PRESENTED BY THE CHURCH OF GOD TO THEM THAT ARE WITHOUT. "Come with us and we will do thee good." III. Let me show what will be the issue of the acceptance of this invitation. Most cheering is the assurance that is given unto those who go with God's people of a positive blessing. "We will do thee good," said Moses to Hobab, "for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." Now I am very anxious just to set before you this truth, that no person can be found who loves God, and who has accepted the invitation to associate with His people, without being a gainer thereby. (*T. W. Aveling.*) *The Christian journeying to the promised land*.—I. THE PLACE SPOKEN OF IN THE TEXT IS CANAAN, a type of heaven, that far-distant but better country which all the

Israel of God have ever regarded as the scene of their blessedness and their home. 1. A much-wished-for place. 2. A promised place. 3. The free gift of God. II. THE CONDUCT OF THE CHRISTIAN WITH REGARD TO THIS PLACE. It is evident that this heavenly country has little or no influence on mankind in general. We profess to believe that there is such a land somewhere in the universe, but we think and act just as though it could nowhere be found. If heaven were to be blotted out from the creation, or if an impassable gulf were to be fixed between it and the earth, our dispositions, our affections, and our conduct, would, in too many instances, remain the same as they are now. But this promised land has a real and abiding influence on the people of God. They seek it; they travel towards it. 1. To be journeying to heaven implies an actual entrance into the path which leads to it. 2. To be journeying to heaven implies also perseverance in seeking it. 3. We are warranted to infer that if we are journeying to heaven, we have not only kept in the road which leads to heaven, but have actually made a progress in it; that, instead of declining we are growing in grace; that we are gradually becoming more and more meet to be partakers of heaven, the nearer we draw to it. 4. There is implied also in journeying to the heavenly Canaan, a fixed determination to arrive there. The expression intimates decision of character; a willingness to sacrifice everything, so that the soul may be saved and heaven won. III. In thus prosecuting his journey to heaven, it is evident that THE CHRISTIAN MUST NECESSARILY SEPARATE HIMSELF FROM MANY OF HIS BRETHREN, with whom he would otherwise have contentedly associated. But although he is constrained by the command of his God and the very nature of the work in which he is engaged, to come out from among the ungodly, he does not consider himself as unconnected with them, nor does he cease to regard them as brethren. 1. If we regard this invitation as the advice of the Christian traveller to his fellow-sinners around him, it implies that he has a sincere and earnest desire to bring them into the path of heaven, which he has himself entered. 2. The invitation of Moses intimates also that the Christian is tenderly concerned for the spiritual welfare of his fellow-travellers, as well as for the repentance and salvation of the wandering sinner. 3. We may infer, lastly, from this invitation, that if we would ever reach the kingdom of God, we must join ourselves now to the people of God. (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *The Christian invitation:—*I. GOD'S PEOPLE ARE TRAVELLING TO THE CELESTIAL CANAAN. I. The journey—(1) Commences in the day of conversion. (2) Is continued by the soul advancing in the knowledge and love of God. (3) Terminates at death. 2. The place to which they are journeying. This is the celestial Canaan; which is—(1) A land of rest. (2) A land of riches and prosperity. (3) A land prepared for and promised to God's spiritual Israel. II. GOD'S PEOPLE FEEL IT THEIR DUTY TO INVITE OTHERS TO JOURNEY WITH THEM TO THE PROMISED LAND. Hence they say, "Come thou with us," &c. 1. That there are many who are not in the way to this goodly land. 2. That there is room and freedom for more in the way to heaven. 3. That God's people are anxious that others should join them in their way to heaven. 4. God's people use their influence to prevail with those around them to accompany them to heaven. They practically invite them, by amiableness of disposition, sweetness of temper, righteousness of life; and thus allure them by the excellencies they manifest, and constrain them to glorify our Father who is in heaven. III. GOD'S PEOPLE HAVE GOOD REASONS TO ASSIGN WHY THOSE AROUND SHOULD GO WITH THEM TO THE GOODLY LAND. The reasons in the text are two: "We will do you good"; and, "The Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." The first is a human reason, and therefore limited. The second is a Divine reason, and unlimited. 1. There is the promise of benevolent help. 2. There is the good declaration of God concerning Israel. "The Lord hath spoken good." What has He not said? Has He not given the most precious promises and the most gracious assurances? Learn: 1. The present state of God's people. It is a journeying state. This is the time of their toil and suffering. 2. The happiness of God's people. Children of God, heirs of eternal life, expectants of the glory that shall be revealed. 3. The true wisdom of those who are without. To accompany God's people on their heavenly pilgrimage. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *The invitation of Moses to Hobab:—*I. GOD'S ISRAEL HAVE A DIRECT OBJECT IN VIEW, thus described, "The place of which the Lord said, I will give it you." By God's Israel I mean literally the posterity of Jacob, and spiritually all genuine Christians, who are "Israelites indeed in whom there is no guile." The object which God's ancient Israel had in view was Canaan; this is described as a place, and on several accounts it was highly desirable. Heaven is the glorious object on which God's spiritual

Israel have fixed their attention. Canaan was highly prized by the Jews—1. As it was the end of their journey. Heaven is the termination of the Christian's journey. The dangers of that terrible wilderness, through which Israel passed, were but faintly typical of the spiritual dangers to which believers are exposed; and if Israel rejoiced at the possession of Canaan, with what exultation will Christians enter their heavenly inheritance, when their toils will be finished and their conflicts closed! 2. It was a country amply stored with provisions. But with all the encomiums bestowed upon Canaan, how low it sinks in comparison with that "better country," to which we are journeying! This is indeed a land without scarceness. Here will be no lack of anything. Here every wish shall be gratified, and every desire be crowned with enjoyment. 3. It was long and repeatedly promised. 4. It was to be gratuitously bestowed. All God's blessings are gifts. II. GOD'S ISRAEL ARE TENDING TOWARDS THAT OBJECT. 1. Commenced by the command of God. 2. Continued under His immediate guidance. 3. Marked by His miraculous and gracious care. III. THAT GOD'S ISRAEL ARE SOLICITOUS TO SECURE COMPANIONS FOR THEIR JOURNEY. "Come thou with us," &c. 1. Piety prompts them to say this. They long to bring back to God His immortal offspring, and to recover to "the great Shepherd of the sheep," the souls for whom He died; and they say, "Come thou with us," &c. 2. Benevolence excites them to say this. Religion inspires the most ardent attachment to God, and breathes the purest benevolence to men. 3. Self-interest induces them to say this. God's Israel are not only capable of doing good to, but of receiving good from their fellow-travellers. IV. GOD'S ISRAEL ENJOY THE DIVINE COMMENDATION. "The Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." 1. Concerning the country to which Israel are tending (Psa. lxxxvii. 3; Rev. xxi. 23-26). 2. Concerning the way in which Israel are journeying. It is called a right way (1 Sam. xii. 23); a good way (Jer. vi. 16); a perfect way (Psa. ci. 2); a way of holiness (Isa. xxxv. 8); a way of peace (Luke i. 79); a new and living way (Heb. x. 20); and a way in which there is no death (Prov. xii. 28). 3. Concerning the succours afforded them in the way. Many things are necessary for travellers. Light to see the way (Prov. iv. 18); a consciousness of being in the right way (Isa. xxx. 21); a guide to instruct us in the way (Psa. xxxii. 8); provision for the way (Psa. cxxxii. 15); strength to walk in the way (Isa. xl. 29-31); and a never-failing Friend to lead us forward in the way (Isa. xlii. 16). 4. "The Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel"—In the titles by which they are designated, such as children of God, sons of God, heirs of God, kings and priests unto God.—In the figures by which they are compared: God's husbandry, God's building, God's heritage, sheep of God's pasture, a royal priesthood, a spiritual house, a crown of glory, and a royal diadem, &c.—In the promises to which they are entitled; these include all things (1 Cor. iii. 21-23). Infer: 1. The happiness of God's people. 2. The work of God's people. 3. The honour of God's people. 4. The security of God's people. (*Sketches of Four Hundred Sermons.*) *Hobab's opportunity*:—I. WHAT GOD SAID TO ISRAEL (see Exod. vi 6-8). II. WHAT MOSES SAID TO HOBAB. 1. An invitation. 2. A promise. "Good." 3. An argument. Lord has spoken, not man. 4. An entreaty. Leave us not. 5. An appeal. "Thou knowest," &c. 6. An inducement. Equal share promised. III. WHAT HOBAB SAID TO MOSES. "I will not go." Six deterring things. 1. His own land. 2. Kindred. 3. Possessions. 4. With strangers. Alien race; other habits. 5. Poor prospects. 6. Uncertainty. What would become of him should Moses die, or if invasion should fail? All find emphatic expression—"I will not go." But Moses pleads long, earnestly, willingly. Hobab yields. House of Raguel. A lot in Canaan—Jael. Rechab. Saved from doom of Midian. IV. WHAT I HAVE TO SAY TO YOU. Same message from God. Six things—1. "Israel." Politically disbanded; exists spiritually; the seed of Abraham; the children of the promise; the Church of Christ. 2. "Good." Freedom from moral Egypt. Divine favour. Life; guidance; aid from God. Inheritance in the Canaan of holiness and heaven. 3. "Come." Cast in your lot with us. Turn back on Midian. It is doomed. Follow our Moses, Jesus, Captain of our salvation. 4. "Leave us not." I too would entreat, beseech, persuade. We want you; your company; your help. The love of Christ constraineth us. 5. "We will do," &c. We can. By prayer, brotherhood, mutual aid, and cheer. Going home. 6. "I pray thee." This with my heart upon my lips, and longing for your soul. Come! Come! Come! V. WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY TO ME. You may say—1. "I will not go." If Midian is your home Midian's doom is yours. 2. "I will follow by and by." By and by leads to house of Never. 3. "I will think about it"—which means, "I will forget it." 4. "Are you

Israel?" Go tell John the things, &c. 5. "I will go with somebody else." Be quick, and God go with you. 6. "I will go with you for," &c. Preacher's prize; your peace; Jesus' glory. VI. WHAT GOD WILL SAY TO US BOTH. I cannot answer. THE DAY WILL DECLARE IT! (*J. Jackson Wray.*) *Moses and Hobab*.—The spirit displayed by Moses is displayed by every Christian man. His words also may be adopted. These words suggest—I. SETTLED CONVICTIONS. "We are journeying," &c. How pleasant this assurance. Do you possess it? 1. Remember the time when you had not this assurance. It was a time of uncertainty—fearfulness. 2. Remember the way in which you obtained this assurance. It was after strong convictions, earnest cries, transporting joys, then came this sweet assurance. 3. Notice the great advantages of this assurance. In a rough road, dark night, &c. II. PROBABLE INCONVENIENCES. Persons on a journey do not expect the comforts of home. They may have—1. Unpleasant weather. The hail and sleet of persecution. The cold snow of poverty. The fog of doubt. 2. Unpleasant conveyance. The means of grace are like vehicles to help us on. Some have to trudge on nearly all the way, others get a lift now and then. Some in comfortable carriages—good doctrine; others in tumble-down—broken springs, &c. 3. Unpleasant companions. The world an inn. In the house. Shop. Church. 4. Unpleasant accommodation. The body is the tabernacle or house in which the soul dwells. Many have sickly, weak bodies, and dwell in much poverty. Never mind. We are journeying. III. CONSTANT PROGRESS. We cannot settle down either—1. In the joys of home and kindred. 2. In the joys of Christian society. 3. In the joys of gospel ordinances. This should teach us—(1) To look upon everything with the eye of travellers. (2) To make everything subservient to our journey. The place of our abode. Our business. Our friendships. (3) To rejoice over those who have finished their journey. They have simply got home before us. IV. PLEASANT PROSPECTS. We have in view—1. A land of freedom. 2. A land of friendship. 3. A land of holiness. 4. A land of happiness. (*The Study.*) *The profitable journey*.—I. GOD HATH SPOKEN GREAT AND GOOD THINGS CONCERNING THE FUTURE STATE OF HIS PEOPLE. II. BELIEVERS ARE NOW ON THEIR JOURNEY TO TAKE POSSESSION OF THIS HEAVENLY COUNTRY; "We are journeying," said Moses to Hobab, "to the promised place." III. TRAVELLERS TO ZION SHOULD INVITE AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO ACCOMPANY THEM; as Moses said to Hobab, "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good." Moses was related to Hobab; and certainly our relations have the first claim to our pious regards (Rom. ix. 1-3; x. 1). And there are several methods in which we may try to do this. 1. By inviting them to hear the gospel faithfully preached. 2. We may promote the salvation of others by serious and affectionate conversation. We readily converse with our neighbours on the news of the day, whether it be good or evil. Why should we be backward to tell them the best news that ever reached our ears—the good tidings of the gospel, "that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners"? 3. The heads of families must endeavour to do good to their households by maintaining family-worship. 4. We may promote the salvation of the rising generation by giving encouragement to Sunday-schools, and other plans for the religious education of children. Some may assist them by subscribing towards their support; and others by their personal help. 5. The distribution of religious tracts is another method in which we may easily invite many around us to come and unite with us, that we may do them good. 6. But all these means must be accompanied with prayer. 7. Above all, and together with all, let our holy, blameless, and useful lives recommend the ways of religion to men. Improvement: What influence have all the good things which God has promised in His gospel had upon us? He has set before us His well-beloved Son; and in Him, pardon and peace, holiness and heaven: all we can want to make us happy in time, happy in death, happy to all eternity. Are we drawn by these cords of love? Are we induced to forsake the sins and vanities of the world? Have we set out on our journey towards heaven, determined to be fellow-travellers with the people of God? or do we hesitate? (*G. Burder.*) *The Christian journey*.—I. Direct your meditations to THE REPRESENTATION GIVEN IN THE TEXT OF ALL THE TRUE ISRAEL OF GOD; they are journeying to the place of which God has spoken. 1. Consider their setting out in the journey, and how this is begun. 2. Journeying to the goodly land of promise implies perseverance and progress in the Divine life. 3. That our journeying to Zion implies difficulties encountered, resisted and overcome. These may be expected, and will be experienced. II. We proceed now to some illustration of THE ANIMATING MOTIVE WHICH ENCOURAGES HEAVENLY TRAVELLERS TO HOLD ON THEIR WAY, which motive is contained in the last part of the text.

"For the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." The Father of mercies has made with us an everlasting covenant, well-ordered in all things, and sure. The Saviour of mankind has purchased for us a kingdom which fadeth not away. The Holy Spirit is our Sanctifier and our Comforter, and graciously undertakes to prepare us for the business and the bliss of heaven. Neither the legions, nor all the powers of hell, can prevent us from inheriting with the saints in light. The time, manner, and all the circumstances of our death, are arranged by unerring wisdom, and by infinite love. Again, all the promises recorded in the sacred volume, pertaining to the life which now is, and to immortal happiness beyond the grave, are yea and amen in Christ, and are ours through Him. All the threatenings recorded in the same Scriptures are transferred to our glorious Surety, and cancelled as to us. The God of glory is our perpetual defence; the Lamb in the midst of the throne our perpetual Friend; angels our kindred, and heaven our home. III. THE AFFECTIONATE AND SALUTARY COUNSEL WHICH TRAVELLERS TO ZION ADDRESS TO OTHERS: "Come with us, and we will do thee good." 1. This implies a sincere concern for the salvation of our kindred and companions. 2. This affectionate address implies also a full conviction, that it never can be well with those who have not their portion with God's children, who worship Him not in spirit, and who rejoice not in Christ Jesus. 3. Again, this language intimates the full persuasion that there is room for the most ignorant, estranged, and hopeless of their kindred, companions, and relatives. (*A. Bonar.*) *The invitation:*—

1. His invitation shows faith's happy state. It is a mirror reflecting the features of calm trust. Full faith has eagle-eye. It penetrates all earthly mists. It gazes steadily on Zion's highest light. Its true affections centre round a purer scene. So daily it moves forward. And nightly realises that an upward step is made. We are journeying unto the promised place. What is this place? Faith gazes—it ever gazes with increasing rapture: but it fails fully to describe. It is rest; perfect purity; joy; sure; the gift of God. 2. This invitation shows that faith is aggressive. "Come thou with us." Each heaven-set plant strives for expanse. True grace has one sure sign: it longs and labours to communicate its wealth. A saving view of Christ slays self—relaxes every icy band—widely extends embracing arms, and yearns to multiply delights. When the heart burns the life must labour. (*Dean Law.*) *The invitation of Moses to Hobab:*—I. THE PEOPLE OF GOD ARE TRAVELLING TO THE HEAVENLY CANAAN. 1. The place itself. (1) The place of rest. (2) The place of purity. (3) The place of unbounded wealth. (4) The place of unceasing enjoyment. 2. The journey. II. IT IS THE DUTY OF CHRISTIANS TO INVITE OTHERS TO JOURNEY WITH THEM. So Moses acted. III. THE REASONS ASSIGNED FOR A COMPLIANCE WITH THIS REQUEST. 1. The promise of mutual good. 2. The Divine regard for the Church. IV. THE MANNER IN WHICH THIS INVITATION MAY BE RECEIVED. 1. Some give a direct negative, as Hobab did at first; "I will not go." The wicked through the pride of his countenance will not seek after God. Some, like Ephraim, are joined to idols, and cannot give them up. Is this your answer? "I will not go." Then you must perish in the wilderness. 2. Some are deterred by pride and shame. They think the people of God beneath them; or what will the world; their present companions, say, if they profess Christ? 3. Some are deterred by the trials of the way. God will be your guide, and He will support you in the severest trials. 4. Some are convinced of the necessity and importance of this journey to heaven, but they procrastinate, like Felix; "Go thy way," &c. 5. Some are willing to go, but have not counted the cost. This was the case with many of Christ's followers, who set out, but turned back, and walked no more with Him (John vi. 66). 6. A few have resolved to go. Like Ruth, nothings shall hinder them. The good work has commenced in their souls. The people are willing in the day of Christ's power. They will go, and like Paul, they count all things but loss, &c. (Ruth i. 16; Heb. xi. 25, 26). (*Helps for the Pulpit.*) *Promise of good:*—I. SOME OF THOSE GOOD THINGS GOD HAS SPOKEN. He says to every Christian as to Jacob, "I will surely do thee good." 1. He has called them to sustain gracious relations towards Him. 2. He secures to them special privileges. 3. He unfolds before them glorious prospects. 4. He enables them in the faith of all this to achieve noble exploits. II. SOME OF THE GOOD THINGS WHICH GOD HAS ACTUALLY DONE FOR THEM. Not words but deeds, might without presumption be said to be the Divine motto. 1. He has emancipated them from a most bitter dominion of sin and death. 2. He has enlightened them with saving wisdom. 3. He has watched over them. The pillar of cloud, only an emblem, "The hairs of thy head." "Fear not, ye are of more value than many sparrows." 4. He accounted their enemies His own. Egyptians, Philistines, Syrians, Babylonians.

Lessons: 1. Let this subject endear the Saviour. 2. Let it stamp vanity upon all the world deems great. 3. Let it encourage prayer and high expectation. 4. Let it prompt to holiness of heart and life. (*Homiletic Magazine*.) *Christian invitation*.—I. A POSITION IS ASSUMED. It was assumed by Moses, that the people of whom he had the care occupied a position, in regard to God and in regard to their own welfare, which was essentially favourable, and in which it was eminently desirable to participate. The same truth must be assumed by and in regard to Christians—those who live under the economy of new covenant mercy. And this will be vindicated by observing that Christians live in the actual enjoyment of Divine favour, and that they possess the prospect of invaluable blessing in the future. II. AN INVITATION IS PRESENTED. Moses offered the invitation to his relative that he would go with them, and thus be the companion of their course; as in the preceding verse he says, “Come thou with us, and we will do thee good”; “Leave us not, I pray thee.” The invitation, we repeat, is presented, in a sense answering to the spirit of their vocation, by Christians to men who hitherto have been living apart, as votaries of sin and of the world. 1. In the name of Christians we say, we invite you to believe their principles. Those principles relate not merely to the elementary truths concerning the being, the government and the attributes of God—they relate to the Divine character and mission of Him whose name we bear, Christ Jesus, the Son of God; they relate to the expiatory sacrifice He has offered for human sin, by expiring upon the Cross; they relate to the imputation of the merit and righteousness embodied in that sacrifice, through faith, as the only efficacious cause of justification and acceptance before the Father; they relate to the agency of the Holy Spirit, in His renewing grace, as requisite to apply the work of mediation to the human soul; and they relate to the duty of obedience and holiness, as the only satisfactory proof of an interest in the work of redemption and of the hope which that redemption is intended to inspire and to secure. Now these various principles are to be sincerely and cordially believed; their presence or absence decides the character and the prospects of men for ever. 2. While we invite you, on behalf of Christians, that you will embrace their principles, we invite you also that you will associate with their communities. 3. We also invite you in the name of Christians, that you will engage in their employments. III. AN ASSURANCE IS PLEDGED. The emphasis of the expressions before us will be found singularly powerful and interesting. “It shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee.” And this assurance may be taken in two departments. There is an assurance from Christians, and there is an assurance by Christians, for their God. 1. Christians pledge the assurance for themselves, that to those who go with them they will render all the assistance in their power. “What goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee.” “We will endeavour to render you participators of all our supports and enjoyments; so that you shall be found entirely as we are, both in the possessions of the present and in the prospects of the future.” 2. Christians pledge the assurance for God. We believe that the moment when your decision occurs will be the moment of your ample and unreserved introduction to all the immunities of the Christian life. There is no process of discipline or preparatory trial, there is no hesitation and there is no delay; the moment when your faith is placed on the great Messiah, and when the resolution of your heart under Divine grace is taken, to devote yourselves to His honour, at that moment all that Christianity can vouchsafe to you is, from the Source of Christianity, your own. (*J. Parsons*.) *Come with us*:—Whither? Israel was going quite through the wilderness into Canaan, the land of promise. Israel of the spirit is going through earth and time to heaven. When the Church says “Come thou with us” to any who are hesitating and undecided, her face is heavenwards, her movement is in that way; she holds in her hand the roll of promise, the map of “the better country, even the heavenly,” and sees her own title to possession written there as with the finger of God. To that country her steps are all directed; into that country she is moving her ranks, as regularly as the morning dawns, as quietly as the night darkens. With the rolling of the years, with the numbering of the weeks, and even with the striking of the hours, she throws her wearied travellers into eternal rest and safety. We see the part of the company that is bright, and strong, and active, but there is always a more illustrious part of it, which we do not see, away somewhat in the distance before us, and passing in silence, through sickness, and by the dim ways of death, into the good land of immortal life and glory. And there is no time for divided purposes, for lingering delays, “Come with us,” quickly come, lest you should be down to the

dark river long before you think; lest your eternal home, the place you are going to, should flash out upon you, and lest it should be, to your surprise and grief, a very different home from that which you are idly hoping to reach. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *Good to be with the good*:—"Come with us and we will do you good." It is good to be with the good. A thousand nameless gifts and precious influences are reciprocated, given and regiven, and enhanced, as they circulate among the faithful. "We will do thee good" is no vain boast; it is the everyday experience of the saints of God in fellowship, of the soldiers of God in conflict, of the sons of God on the way through the wilderness to their home. To be with a person in spirit-friendship is to get, in a measure, what he has in him to give away, be it good or evil, glory or disgrace. You must be changed in a degree into the same image, whatever that image may be. The effluence of his life will flow into yours, and of yours into his. The sublimest action of this principle is when the disciple is with the Master, giving nothing, but receiving all, and then men take knowledge of him that he has been with Jesus. But it is really the action substantially, of the same principle when the company of His followers, standing well together in their fellowship, and going step by step in their march, are able thus to promise to all whom they invite, "We will do you good." It is good to be with the good. It is good to be aiming after goodness. The Christian recompense begins as soon as the Christian endeavour begins. (*Ibid.*) *Keeping good company*:—"I think it is fair to notice that there was a little in the circumstances of the time to help Hobab to say "No." For Moses had to say, "We are journeying." They did not look at their best; all was in confusion; God's people here below never do look at their best. You know how vexed you are if some particular friend comes and calls when you are in all the uproar and confusion of a removal. You would say, "Oh, dear me! I hope this won't have a damaging effect; I hope there won't be any inferences drawn from this higgledy-piggledy condition of things." And I think Moses felt it. I feel it as the spokesman for Israel to-day, pleading with any who have not yet come to join themselves to Israel, who have not come into the camp, into the household of faith. I anticipate your objection. You may well say as Hobab perhaps further thought. "Well," he might think, "I do know a little about these Israelites, and I know more than what is good about them. So far as I have been able to see during the past year, they are a mixed lot." And so they were. And I have to make much the same admission as regards Christians. I do not want to spoil my case with any "halter-between-two-opinions," by doing what recruiting-sergeants in the old days were given to, viz., telling lies—for that is the plain English of it. I shall not speak the language of exaggeration. You find fault with us from the outside, and I admit it. You say, "Why should I come?" There are, it may be, points of character on which worldlings, so far as you have met them, are superior to Christians whom you have met. More's the pity; but I admit it. We are oftentimes a sorry lot, a miserable crowd with our bickerings, and fightings, and jealousies. We please not God, and are contrary to all men; but—but—but take us at our worst, there is a side of us that never can be exaggerated. There is a side of us, and a thing in us, for the sake of which I would advise our ke-nest critic to rub his eyes and look again ere he gives us up. And remember, besides, that if I choose, I can turn your argument. It is easy for you to turn round to us; it is easy for Hobab to turn to me and say, "What Christians we are," and that he has found us a stupid lot, and so on. But may I not say, Are you a great deal better? Come along, and show us an example. It is not really fair to stand outside and criticise—take a turn along the road with us for a mile or two. Many a man has had great objections to being a Christian, and has discovered many faults in the Israelites so long as he was a Midianite. But when he crossed over from Midian into Israel, and tried to keep his own eyes on the pillar of cloud, and tried to rule his own conduct according to the law and the sacrifices, his head hung a bit lower, and he had less to say about his neighbours. He had glimpses within that he would never have had otherwise; of great ravines, and chasms of imperfection; tremendous face-blanching possibilities of evil revealed in himself that have made him sing to a more gracious tune, if they have not made him sing dumb altogether. So I come back: "Come thou with us." I feel as though I were like a dear mother I saw down, I think, at King's Cross, not long ago. She was standing with one foot on the carriage-board, and the other foot on the platform, and she was arguing evidently with her wayward boy. "Come back, come; you will be better at home; every one is waiting for you." But he hummed and hawed, turned this way and that way, looked every way but into his mother's face, and was most uncomfortable

and uneasy. And sorry am I to add that the last I saw was the conductor coming hurrying along; there was a kiss and an embrace between mother and son, and then they parted, she to step into the train, and he to go away back, as he answered, "I will not go." Very like just where Moses was with Hobab, and where I am with some of you. I want you to come, I long for you to come. I know you can raise many difficulties and objections. Like that lad, you like the freedom; like Hobab, you like a desert life. But even although you should say, "No," still I shall look to see you changing your mind, like Hobab. For, later on in Scripture, we have evidences that he afterwards repented and went. Let me go on with my text. "We will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." Will that do? We are only journeying, we have not arrived; but we have the promises of God. Yes; and we have something to show, we have our own tale to tell. We are redeemed, at any rate; we are a ransomed lot; and when you are piling together all the disparaging adjectives you can gather to describe us, don't forget the others. There is a ransomed look about us, unless we utterly belie the deepest and truest things in us. We are no longer slaves. True, we are not what we ought to be, but we are saved sinners. We have got that to begin with, and "we are journeying" for all the rest. We are taking God at His word, and hitherto the dullest of us, if you push him hard, is compelled to say the Lord, has been, at least, as good as His word. Now, will you come? "And he said, I will not go; but I will depart to my own land, and to my own kindred." Poor Hobab! Many have been kept back in that way: "mine own land, mine own kindred." Now, how would you like it if to-night I brought the argument to a point by saying I dispute the word "mine"—you have no land, you have no kindred? Hobab, you are using words that you have no right to use in any absolute sense of possession—"Mine own land, mine own kindred." That is a word that this world won't allow, not to speak of God's Word. But, Hobab, if you want true possessions, if you want true wealth, a real portion, that even death will not destroy (death will only usher you into a more abundant sense of the possession of it), then come with us. Don't look back to Midian; don't look back to Sodom; don't cast longing, lingering looks behind. Look forward. See what Christ offers you, and come. You lose nothing that would be for your good: "No good thing will God withhold from them that walk uprightly." And if you have to lose; if, from a worldly point of view, from the point of view of selfishness, and self-will, and your own unhallowed ambitions—if you have to lay things on the altar, then you are a blessed man—that is the path of life, and not of death. "He that loveth his life shall lose it; he that hateth his life (he that seems to fling it away) shall find it unto life eternal." And Moses pleaded with him further, and said, "Leave us not, I pray thee," &c. Pardon me if I am urgent with you; let me plead with you. You can be of use to us. Will that draw some of you? We want you, frankly and freely. Are you imaginative, musical, poetical, literary? Are you a good financier? Have you certain qualities that mark you off specially as a father, or as a mother, or as a wife, or as a friend? Come with us; we need you, you will be of use to us. It is one of the sweet things about Israel that God wants every kind of person. Then come. We are journeying, we are a going concern, we are moving on, onward and upward; no stop, no stay. Nothing can resist our progress; from night to morning, from morning till night, the one thing in God's universe that moves is His Israel; and every step is a step upward, and every fall is a fall forward. We are on the winning side, all that is enduring is with us. Come, oh, come! (*John McNeill.*) *The state of mind in Moses which prompted this invitation:*—These words afford us more than one glimpse into Moses's state of mind. More than forty years had now elapsed since he had "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." What enabled him to make this difficult choice? The apostle tells us, "faith." But faith is a grace that does not stand alone. It soon becomes the parent of other graces. God has told us what He is; and it is the characteristic of faith to rest in Him as a present God—to enjoy Him as an all-sufficient and present portion. But God has spoken about His people's future—told them not only what He is, but what He will be to them. He hath spoken "good concerning Israel." These promises kindle and sustain "hope." The heart is enlarged with the joyful anticipation of things to come. Moses's invitation to Hobab shows that "hope" was one, it may be the prevailing, characteristic of his state of mind at this time. There was something, too, in his outward circumstances which might give an impulse to this expansive feeling. Hitherto they had been marching almost away

from the land of promise; now their steps were turned, and they were about to move in a direct line for it. This had no effect whatever on the minds of the carnal and discontented Israel; present inconveniences and trials completely thrust all the promises out of their minds. But Moses pondered the promise; he anticipated the "good which God had spoken concerning Israel." Hope rose high in his expecting heart, rendering more bearable the heavy burden which he had to carry—a disobedient and gainsaying people. Why is it that our hearts do not abound more in hope? Is it not that they are not occupied enough with God's promises? That they do not realise, as Moses did, the good which God hath spoken concerning Israel? We live too much in the present or the past, and not enough in the future. Hope, then, was a feature of Moses's spirit. But another is very apparent in this invitation to Hobab—his holy benevolence. He was anxious that one related to him, though not of Israel, should share in the "good" promised to Israel. And this is the more beautiful, when we bear in mind that Israel of old was not called to impart to others the truths which they had been taught. The Church of the Old Testament was not in any sense, to use a common expression, a "missionary Church." Its duty was to keep the oracles of God, and to live in complete separation from all the other nations of the earth: so that Moses went beyond the spirit and requirements of the law when he gave utterance to the benevolent desire of his heart, "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for God hath spoken good concerning Israel." But we who live in the latter times, when the fulness of Divine love has burst through the barriers which for a time confined it, when the gracious command has been given, "Preach the gospel to every creature," we ought to say, by the holiness of our lives, by the sympathy of our hearts, by the words of our lips, to those around us, "Come with us, and we will do thee good." We see this compassionate love in Paul (Rom. x. 1; 1 Thess. ii. 8). We see it in the beloved John (3 John 4). But, most of all, we see it in Jesus, the fountain of all grace—"For when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." And how full of love are His repeated invitations—"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden." "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." Oh, we ought to be more like-minded with Jesus; and if we realised more the good which God has spoken concerning Israel, we should surely desire that relations and friends might "come with us"; that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same He might do to them. (*G. Wagner.*)

The religion of the promise:—If we are honest and genuine in our Christian believing, these words are as true for you and me as they were for Moses and his Israel. We, too, are on a journey. For us to-day, just as really as for them in days of old, the stimulus continues to be simply this—a promise. Heaven cannot be demonstrated. We simply take God's word for it. The Christian religion is emphatically the religion of the promise. In heathen religion, the threat predominates over the promise. But in the glad faith that boasts the name of gospel, the promise predominates over the threat. Christians are men with a hope, men who have been called to inherit a blessing. The complaint that the progress of human knowledge has made it difficult to think and speak of heaven as believing men used to think and speak of it, is a complaint to which we must briefly refer. Let me observe, then, that while there is a certain grain of reasonableness in this argument for silence with respect to heaven and the things of heaven, there is by no means so much weight to be attached to it as many people seem to suppose. For after all, when we come to think of it, this changed conception of what heaven may be like is not traceable so much to any marvellous revolution that has come over the whole character of human thought since you and I were children, as it is to the changes which have taken place in our own several minds, and which necessarily take place in every mind in its progress from infancy to maturity. But let me try to strike closer home, and meet the difficulty in a more direct and helpful way. I do it by asking whether we ought not to feel ashamed of ourselves, thus to talk about having been robbed of the promise simply because the Father of heaven has been showing us, just as fast as our poor minds could bear the strain, to how immeasurable an area the Fatherhood extends. The reality and trustworthiness of the promise are not one whit affected by this revelation of the vastness of the resources which lie at His command who makes the promise. Instead of repining because we cannot dwarf God's universe so as to make it fit perfectly the smallness of our notions, let us turn all our energies to seeking to enlarge the capacity of our faith, so that it shall be able to hold more. It may

turn out, who can tell? that heaven lies nearer to us than even in our childhood we ever ventured to suppose; that it is not only nearer than the sky, but nearer than the clouds. Be this as it may, the reasonableness of our believing in Christ's promise, that in the world whither He went He would prepare a place for us, is in nowise impugned by anything that the busy wit of man has yet found out or is likely to find out. That belief rests on grounds of its own, and, far from forbidding, it encourages us to let our ideas of the fulness, the extent of the blessing promised, expand more and more. We need have no fear that, so long as we are in the flesh and on the earth, our acquaintance with the realities of heaven will ever outrun the capacity of the Bible language about heaven to express what we may have discovered. On the contrary, let us make more and more of these great and precious promises of God. Let us resolve to think oftener of the place of which the Lord has said that He would give it us. There is no period of life from which we can afford to spare the presence of this heavenly hope. We need it in youth, to give point and purpose and direction to the newly-launched life. It would be a strange answer to give from a ship just out of the harbour's mouth, in reply to the question, "Whither bound?"—"Nowhere." But not in youth only is belief in this ancient promise of God a blessing to us. We need it in middle life. We need it to help us cover patiently that long stretch which parts youth from old age—the time of the fading out of illusions in the dry light of experience; the time when we discover the extent of our personal range, and the narrow limit of our possible achievement. We need it then, that we may be enabled to replace failing hopes with fresher ones, and neither falter nor sink under the burden and heat of the day. Above all, shall we find such a hope the staff of old age, should the pilgrimage last so long. (*W. R. Huntington, D.D.*) *The Christian life a journey*:—I. We are to view the Christian leaving THE WORLD BEHIND HIM. We do not mean by this that he is to go out of the world. He may remain in it, and perform with diligence all the duties of his station, but he must give up the spirit, the tastes, the habits of the world; he must use the world without abusing it, and "count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord." II. We are to view the Christian with THE CROSS ON HIS BACK. It may appear unwise to lay a cross upon a man that is journeying, because it is apparently burdensome; but there is this difference between a temporal journey and the spiritual one: the cross does not enfeeble, it only makes us sensible of the weakness that exists. Indeed, in this journey it is generally found that he whose cross is the heaviest makes the greatest progress. With the cross on his back the Christian is less liable to wander. It keeps him steady in the right way. It is true that "no chastening for the present is joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them which are exercised thereby." The cross which the Christian carries is not selected by himself, but it is appointed by God. Sometimes it is outward affliction; sometimes inward temptations, as is best suited to the character and circumstances of the individual. III. The Christian journeys with THE BIBLE IN HIS HAND. When a man sets out on a journey, he procures a book or map of the road, and directs his course accordingly. It is not enough that he intends or desires to go right, he must be regulated by his guide. If you were travelling through a strange country, and you knew not the various turnings and windings of the road, how anxiously would you look to your map, to see if you were right; particularly if there were certain marks by which you might know whether you were in the appointed track. The maxims of the world may deceive you; the reasonings of your own mind may perplex you; even the experience of professed Christians, being unscriptural or unsuitable, may mislead you; but "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." IV. In the spiritual journey the Christian has CHRIST AT HIS SIDE. Throughout the way, all the strength that is received is from His fulness. "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell." Christ continually sustains the believer's soul. There are times with the most eminent Christian when the brightness is dimmed and dangers are multiplied; "when the soul is much discouraged because of the way." In such seasons nothing but a view of Christ can cheer the soul. None ever travelled this road without feeling a humbling sense of his own weakness in the spiritual conflict. He has at times fallen, but a look at Christ, even if fallen, while it humbles, encourages. V. THE CHRISTIAN PILGRIM KEEPS HEAVEN IN HIS VIEW. Both the pains and the pleasures of the way stir up his heart to think of it. He hastens on, regardless of the accommodations by the way, so that he may but

reach his home at last. With him the idea is not that of mere release from suffering, but of being brought to the permanent enjoyment of that Saviour with whom he has walked by faith. On this his mind is bent, nor will he be fully satisfied till that blessed time arrive. Application: 1. To you who are going quite another road. What do you expect at the end of it? You hope to be saved at last. On what are your expectations founded? 2. I would invite the young to commence this journey. It is true that the world has its pleasures, and they are placed before you in an alluring point of view; but they are deceitful. Religion has its pleasures, and they are solid and durable. 3. A word of encouragement to those who are on the road. Be grateful that while so many are travelling on in the broad road, you have, through grace, been brought to walk in this heavenly path. Gird up the loins of your mind—take up your cross cheerfully and follow Christ. (*J. G. Breay, B.A.*) *Persuasives and promises to pilgrims:—*I. A PICTURE OF THE CHRISTIAN'S PILGRIMAGE. That wilderness wandering, so deeply indented with marks of Divine intervention, so resplendent with proofs of a present God, who went before them, cleaving the sea and the flood for them, subduing their enemies round about, is a varied type of the Church in the world. 1. The first lesson lying on the surface is that which relates to bearing testimony for Christ. There should be no hesitation about a Christian, as if he were afraid to say he was on the way to heaven. His speech or silence; his activity or quiet submission to the Divine will; his work and his worship, should boldly declare "whose he is, and whom he serves." 2. A second lesson taught us here is one of mutual forbearance. Though all Christians are journeying to the one place, there is a wide diversity of experience, of capacity, of attainment. No two human faces are alike; and it may be safely affirmed that no two conversions are in all respects the same, and no two Christians, however close their affections and sympathies, "grow in grace" at the same rate, or in dependence on the same supplies. II. A POWERFUL PLEADING WITH OTHERS TO JOIN THE PILGRIM IN HIS PROGRESS. There is a true ring in these words. Moses knew whom he had believed, and trusted his heavenly Father implicitly. 1. His invitation is founded on the Divine precept: "The Lord hath said I will give it you." It was a poor nomadic life after all—the tribes were living in the desert—if there had been no goal to which their aspirations and their movements tended. But the word of the Lord was a sure word on which to hope. With Divine leadership, pioneering and providing, defending and protecting, and a glorious inheritance at the end of the pilgrimage, there was everything to quicken, stimulate, and strengthen. Our condition is very like theirs, for we have not yet come "to the rest and the inheritance which God is to give to us," but we are on the way. 2. It is founded on a rich promise: "The Lord said I will give it you," and "the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." As God promised Canaan to the tribes, so has "He opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers" by Jesus Christ. What though a wearisome pilgrimage lie between us and the heavenly rest, though dangers, enemies, fears manifold, are in the way, in nothing shall we be ashamed. All good is promised and not evil, what is good for body and soul, solid, enduring good, "the good part that shall not be taken away," even when life departs. Canaan was the ultimate embodiment of that good to ancient Israel, as heaven and eternal felicity with Christ are to us. But those of them that were true saints and pilgrims would have a foretaste of Canaan beforehand, as we too have of heaven upon earth. What was good for Hobab in the wilderness cannot be bad for us here, with heaven in reversion. 3. The invitation contains an earnest persuasive—"Come with us." True religion seeks to propagate itself by communicating its goodness to others. Persuasion and compulsion are the natural opposites of each other. The one entices, allures, woos, with sweet attention and magnetic influence: the other drives with mechanical force. Persuasion is that spirit of the gospel such as came from the living lips of Jesus when He said, "Come unto Me and I will give you rest"—that love which many waters could not quench, nor many floods drown. Who has not heard the fable of the sun and wind striving which of the two would compel a traveller to put off his cloak, the sun being the victor? Men will be led when they refuse to be driven. It is the love that plies persuasions, strengthened by incentives, and beautified by promises of the *summum bonum*, the supreme good to be got by coming over the line and coming out from the world, that conquers. (*J. Blair.*) *The start from Sinai:—*1. MOSES' PROPOSAL. During their stay at Sinai, it is probable that deputations from neighbouring tribes visited the people, and amongst them was this chieftain of a tribe closely related to Moses by marriage. Hobab, we are told, was the son of

Reuel, the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law. Of course, he knew the country well, every foot of it, where the springs lay, and the pastures, and the safest, shortest routes, and so Moses approached him with the request that he would go with them, to give them the benefit of his practical knowledge. "Leave us not, I pray thee, forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou shalt be to us instead of eyes." This request was, of course, most natural. Moses was a very lonely man, and it was pleasant to have one, bound to him by a blood affinity, to unburden himself to, in any special crisis. At the same time, it was at variance with the general custom, which even then must have commenced strongly to assert itself, of Israelite exclusiveness. There must have been a strong reason that prompted this invitation. And shall we not find it in that instinctive shrinking of the human heart from the strange and unknown way? How well to have a Hobab who knows the ground! We seek our Hobabs in the advice of sage, grey-haired counsellors; in the formation of strong, intelligent, and wealthy committees; in a careful observance of precedent. Anything seems better than a simple reliance on an unseen guide. Now, in one sense, there is no harm in this. We have neither right nor need to cut ourselves adrift from others, who have had special experience in some new ground on which we are venturing. God often speaks to us through our fellows; they are His ministers to us for good. But there is also a great danger that we should put man before God; and that we should so cling to Hobab, as to become unmindful of the true Guide and Leader of souls. How often God is compelled to isolate us from human voices.

II. THE FAILURE OF HOBAB AND THE DIVINE SUBSTITUTE. The desert chieftain was by no means enamoured of the proposal of his great relative. Several considerations may have weighed with him. It was only a month before that Aaron and his sons had been set apart for their sacred work, and the fire of God had fallen on their dedicatory sacrifices. For some violation of the sacred ritual, for personal misconduct whilst engaged in their ministry, the two young priests had been stricken dead, and Aaron forbidden to weep. This must have struck an awful fear through the camp. Shortly after this another incident occurred. The son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian, had blasphemed the holy name of God, and cursed in the midst of conflict with a man of Israel. The blasphemer had been stoned. The result of it all was that in reply to Moses' request, he said bluntly, "I will not go, but I will depart unto mine own land and to my kindred." Moses still further entreated him, but whether he succeeded or not is doubtful, though there are some reasons for thinking that the second request prevailed, because the descendants of the Kenite are numbered amidst the chosen people. But it would seem as if his aid was rendered needless by the provision of guidance immediately promised. Up to this moment the position of the Ark had been in the midst of the host in front of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, but henceforth it went three days' journey in front of the people, "to seek out a resting-place for them." The Lord Himself had become Director and Guide, and all that Israel had to do was to keep at a distance sufficiently wide to enable them to reap the fullest benefit of its advance guard. Thus God Himself superseded the proposal of Moses by an expedient which more than met their needs. What consolation there is to each of us, in realising the spiritual truth underlying this historical fact! We have to pass into the untried and unknown, and know not the way we should take. Some have to go alone. Some with the memory of companions that once went at their side, but whom they will see no more in this life. But amid all Jesus is with them, and goes before them, whether for war or rest. He never will forsake nor leave them. The Lord Jesus is the true Ark of the Covenant, who has gone before us through the world and death, through the grave and the last rally of the hosts of darkness to the glory. We have but to follow Him. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*)

Where are you going?—When friends and neighbours meet in the streets or roads, the commonest question is, *Where are you going?* All kinds of answers are returned; one is going on an errand of business, another of pleasure; one is going to wealth and success, another, with broken fortunes and blighted hopes, is going to the grave, which holds all that was most dear to him on earth. "Where are you going?" What wonderful answers we should get if we asked that question of the first fifty people only whom we met! But however different those replies would be, God's people ought to be able to give one and the same answer—"We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you." We know not through what dangers, difficulties, and trials; we know not for how long our journey shall be; we know not what will befall us on the

way, but we have set our faces steadfastly to go to the promised land, to Jerusalem, which is above, to the Paradise of God, "the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you." (*H. J. Wilmot-Buxton, M.A.*) *Gospel invitations*:—A beautiful picture this! full of modern questioning—a very pattern of inquiry and invitation in a gospel sense. Can we honestly invite men to join us on our life-march? Consider the question well. Do not involve others in grievous and mournful responsibilities. Do not entreat men to leave what is to them at least a partial blessing, unless you are sure you can replace that enjoyment by purer and larger gladness. Can we honestly, with the full consent of judgment, conscientiousness, and experience, invite men to join us in the way which we have determined to take?—If not, do not let us add the murder of souls to our other crimes. Do not let us, merely for the sake of companionship, involve in ruin innocent men. What is our life-march? To what place are we journeying? Who laid its foundation? Who lighted its lamps? Who spread its feast? What is its name? Be careful how you ask people to go along with you. First lay down a basis of sound wisdom. "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you." If that be the first sentence, or part of it, the sentence may end in the boldest invitation ever issued by love to the banquet of grace and wisdom. But let us have no adventuring, no foolish or frivolous speculation in life; let us speak from the citadel of conviction and from the sanctuary of assured religious confidence. Have we such a view of the end as may make us independent of immediate trials? When we invite men to join us on the Christian pilgrimage, it must be on the distinct understanding that we are ruling the present by the future. This is precisely the logic of Moses: "We are journeying unto the place." The end was indicated—the goal, the destiny of the march; and that was so bright, so alluring, so glowing with all hospitable colour, that Moses did not see that to-morrow there was to be a battle, or seeing it, already passed the warfield like a victor. We must draw ourselves forward by taking firm hold of the end—in other words, we must have such a conception of life's destiny as will invigorate every noble motive, stir every sacred passion, and make us more than conquerors in all war and conflict. This was the reasoning of Moses, this was the reasoning of Paul, this was the practice of Christ; and we are not yet advanced enough in true wisdom to modify the terms or readjust and redistribute the conditions. Moses did not invite Hobab to join merely for the sake of being in the company; he expected service from Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite. He said, Thou knowest the ground so well that thy presence will be of service to us; experience will assist devotion; we are willing to march; we know nothing of the processes of the way; thou understandest the whole country; come with us and be as eyes unto us. Moses showed leadership even there; it was the invitation of a soldier and a legislator and a wise man. Eyes are of inexpressible value in the whole conduct of life; to be able to see, to take note of, to recognise—the man who can do this is rendering service to the whole Church. So we invite men to come with us that they may render service according to their opportunity and capacity. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *An invitation to Christian fellowship*:—I. AS A CERTAIN SCRIPTURAL DUTY. Every reasonable person, conscious of accountability to God, will seriously inquire, What is the duty enjoined upon me by my Creator, my Redeemer, and my Judge? To the Bible we therefore appeal, while considering the subject of fellowship with Christ's followers. 1. That it is our duty fully to unite with Christians is evident from the Scriptural representations of the followers of Christ. Among the instructive representations which clearly imply their union is that of a house or building (1 Cor. iii. 9, 11). In a building, the foundation and the other various necessary parts are united, in order to form a useful edifice: and Christians are built upon Christ, and united to each other, "as lively stones, built up a spiritual house" (1 Peter ii. 5). Christ's followers are next set forth as a household, a united family. They are designated "the household of faith" (Gal. vi. 10), "the household of God" (Eph. ii. 19), and "the house of God," in which Paul taught Timothy "how to behave" (1 Tim. iii. 15). Christians are also represented as "one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom. xii. 5). They "are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (1 Cor. xii. 27). 2. The certain duty of full union with Christians is clearly taught by the Scriptural history of Christ's followers. It is evident from this record that when persons received Christ as their Saviour they embraced His people as their people. They gave themselves first to Him, and then to His followers according to His will (2 Cor. viii.

5). When Saul of Tarsus was converted, he appears to have thought joining the united Christians as certainly his duty, as trusting in Christ their Saviour. "He not only preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus," but on coming to Jerusalem, where there was a Christian Society, he at once "assayed to join himself to the disciples," who were afraid to receive him, until Barnabas testified that he had become a Christian. This narrated conduct of inspired men clearly teaches that Christian fellowship ought to be sought and manifested by all professing Christians. 3. The Scriptural obligations of Christ's followers certainly imply the public union of those who bear His name. (1) Our solemn obligation to confess Christ before men cannot be fully discharged unless we are publicly identified with His disciples, and thus share His reproach and His honour, His pain and His pleasure. (2) The obligations which we owe to ourselves cannot be fulfilled without union with Christ's followers. The blessings of salvation are freely offered in the gospel; but experience and observation assure us that they can neither be fully obtained, nor long retained, without fellowship with those who would assist us to secure their enjoyment. And even where a most promising state of grace has been manifested, if persons have "forsaken the assembling of themselves together" in Christian communion, the blooming work has been blasted, the heavenly offspring has been destroyed, and the hopes of the Church have been painfully disappointed. Numerous facts, doubtless, caused Mr. Whitefield to remark:—"My brother Wesley acted wisely. The souls that were awakened under his ministry he joined in class, and thus preserved the fruits of his labour. This I neglected, and my people are a rope of sand." (3) The obligations which Christians owe to each other cannot be observed without the fellowship of which we speak. Christ's disciples are required to have the same care one for another (1 Cor. xii. 25); to rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep (Rom. xii. 15, 16); to bear each other's burdens (Gal. vi. 2); to walk in love as Christ has loved them (Eph. v. 2); to be like-minded (Phil. ii. 2); to teach and admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs (Col. iii. 16). How is it possible, without public, intimate, and frequent fellowship, to discharge these enjoined, mutual duties? (4) The obligations which Christians owe to the world cannot be performed without our public union. How can true Christian ministers be raised, and called, and sent forth by means of Christian Churches, unless such Churches are formed? If Christians really stand forth as Christ's chosen witnesses, and go forth as His servants to claim and save the world, they must unite for the accomplishment of these objects.

II. HIGHLY ADVANTAGEOUS. 1. This union raises us to fellowship with the best of society. 2. Public union with Christ's followers would prove a powerful preservative from sin. 3. The union of which we speak would furnish you with a most desirable sphere of usefulness. This powerful motive was presented to Hobab when Moses showed the individual assistance which he might afford for the general good (ver. 31). Every rightly-disposed person will not live to please or serve himself merely; but, seeking God's honour, and using his influence for the benefit of his generation, will hail with gladness the facilities for increased usefulness which may be presented in connection with Christ's active followers. 4. Christian union would entitle you to an interest in the special prayers of Christ and His followers. 5. Communion with Christians will be attended with a share in Christ's most gracious regard. We do not say that this Christian union will ensure heaven; but we do affirm that if you truly trust in Christ, and are united in His name, you will have such an interest in His regard as no individual who neglects thus to profess Him can Scripturally claim. Christ is not only round about His united Churches, but the glory in the midst of them (Zech. ii. 6; Psal. xlii. 5; Isa. xii. 6). They are, and ever will be, favoured with His most gracious presence.

III. EARNESTLY INVITE YOU TO FULL FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST'S FOLLOWERS. "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good." 1. Abandon forbidden fellowship with sinners. These will soon perish in their sins. Separate yourself, therefore, from them, that you perish not in their company (chap. xvi. 26). 2. Let all sin, as well as the company of sinners, be forsaken. Be not an Achan in the camp, nor a Simon in a Christian society; but let your hands be clean, and your heart right in the sight of God. Thus guard against substituting a religious profession for inward and outward holiness. 3. As God's unworthy servants, and relying upon His promised grace, we engage to do you good. How many in that glorious multitude have received good in our connection? 4. This invitation is given, and this promise is made, personally. "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good." We invite you who are more learned than most persons, having enjoyed superior

advantages. Be to others what Hobab was to Israel, "instead of eyes." You who are not so learned as others, but whose attainments are painfully limited, we do not despise. Be not proudly ashamed because you are not so well informed, and so able to speak, as many with whom you are invited to unite. To you who are rich, and increased in earthly goods, we say, Come with us, and we will do you good. Perhaps you are tempted to look upon the poor in our societies, and then around you in the circle of respectable worldly persons who are your equals, and your natural heart may suggest, "I cannot associate and be one with those poor persons, and thus sink in public estimation, and sacrifice opportunities of still rising in society." Before you yield to such suggestions, remember Him who was surrounded by heaven's highest inhabitants, and receiving their loudest praises; yet He stooped, and for your sake became poor, that you through His poverty might be rich (2 Cor. viii. 9). From the poor in this world we turn not away, but offer you the right hand of fellowship. You have no place among the children of rich men, but you may have a place among God's children. To the aged, pained by the past, and dreading the future, we respectfully say, "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good." Oh, that you had come sooner, that you might have done good as well as received good! But come now. End your days in the Christian fold. Finish life with Christians and as a Christian. With one accord our language is, "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord hath said, I will give it you." The inheritance is sufficient for all. It is offered to all. Part of our company have entered that better country, and are now before the throne. With this fixed purpose to "travel to the mount of God" ourselves, and with the prospect of there joining the general assembly and Church of the first-born, whom shall we pass and leave behind to perish? (*Wright Shovelton.*) *God's goodness to His people*:—A German, converted at one of the military stations in America, seemed overwhelmed with surprise and gladness as he contemplated God's gracious goodness to him. He was overheard one day praying, "O Lord Jesus, I didn't know you were so good." *The solicitude of the godly*:—I have seen birds sitting on the boughs and watching while other birds were feeding below. They would hop from twig to twig, and look wistfully down upon them; then, gathering courage, they would spring from their perch and back again, and finding that it did not hurt them, they would at last join the outmost circle, and feed with the others. How many faces I have seen in these galleries, wearing a wistful look as they gazed down upon us while we were celebrating this ordinance of communion. May God give all such wings, that they may fly down and be among His people, and partake with them of heavenly food! (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The beginning of the heavenly journey*:—Some who see men hurrying along at noon towards the various prayer-meetings, say, "It's a fever which must have its way, and then it will subside." They see a young man going to the meeting, and think it nothing to excite interest. They do not know that that young man had come up to a point where, if nothing had occurred to save him, he would have been bound over to destruction at the very next step. They do not see, in some far-distant village, the mother or the sister praying and weeping for him—no sound of a father's groan is heard—none of these things; the petitions that for years have assailed the heavens, both day and night, do not cling about the youth as he walks the street; but that prayer-meeting God made to answer the desire of the parents, and to bring salvation to the son. And eternity will show that the young man's walking towards that place of prayer was the beginning of his march to heaven. (*Ibid.*) *Preparing for the journey*:—A poor blacksmith, bending with age and weakness, was passing through a country village: he stopped at a good woman's cottage, and rested himself on the railing before the door. The pious dame came out, and the weary traveller remarked that his time here would be short; he was always ailing: he added, "Ah, Nanny! I sha'n't be long for this world, I reckon!" She thought of his words, and replied, "Well, John, then I hope you'll prepare for your journey!" The blacksmith passed on, and his call was soon forgotten by Nanny; but that simple sentence was impressed on his memory by the Spirit of God, never to be erased. He pondered it while walking home, and soon consumption laid him on a bed of pain. Again and again did he think about "the journey," and about being "prepared" for it. He began to pray, and all around him were continually hearing the old woman's advice. No pious friends were near to converse with him, but it is confidently believed that the aged sinner was led to look to the Saviour through the simple incident related above. Almost his last breath was spent in thanking God that the good old woman ever warned him. (*Christian Miscellany.*) *Rejoicing in the promises*:—I went to see

a dear aged Christian woman who is a member of the Church of which I am the pastor. She was lying physically helpless, but no one had called to light the fire that day; the black grate with the whitish-grey ash of yesterday's fire still in it made the room look desolate and cold. Turning towards the bed, I saw that the dear child of God was weeping, and thought it was from hunger and loneliness; but I was mistaken, for she had spent the morning reading the precious promises of God, thus forgetting all earthly considerations in looking forward to the bright hereafter. "Oh," she said in her Scotch way, "I can soop (sweep) them (the promises) up like diamonds." (*J. Munro.*)

Vers. 35, 36. **When the ark set forward . . . and when it rested.**—*The march* :—**I. THIS HAS BEEN THE WATCHWORD OF THE CHURCH OF GOD IN ALL AGES.** The people of God in the wilderness were the picture of God's Church upon earth. We are strangers and foreigners upon the earth. Albeit that they had no habitation except their tents, yet it is true of Israel in the wilderness that they always had an habitation. Do you not remember the song of Moses :—"Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations." Wherever they were, God was their dwelling-place. This, too, is true of the entire Church; always wandering, yet never far from home; unboused, yet always in palaces; sometimes destitute, afflicted, tormented, and yet always clothed, always rich, always feasting to the full; deserted, yet not alone; forsaken, yet multiplied; left, yet still abiding with Him that filleth all in all. We might carry the parallel out still further, but it is enough to remark that, in another point, the people of God in the wilderness were the picture of the Church of Christ. Wherever they marched, when God went before them, they marched to victory. Even so hath it been with the Church of God in all ages; her march has been that of one who is fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners. Let but her silvery trumpet sound, and the echo shakes the vaults of hell. Let but her warriors unsheath their sword, and their enemies fly before them like the thin clouds before a Biscay gale. Her path is the pathway of a conqueror: her march has been a procession of triumph. Wherever she hath put her foot, the Lord hath given her that land to be her heritage for ever. Now, let me show how this war-cry has really been heard of God and has been fulfilled to all His people. Turn ye to this book, this book of the wars of the Lord. Wherever His Church has gone and He has risen up, have not His enemies been scattered? Methinks, in a spiritual sense, when Luther first bowed his knee, the Church began to chant, "Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered." When Knox in Scotland upheld the glory of Jesus' name, was it not once again, "O God arise, let them that hate Thee flee before Thee"? When Whitefield and Wesley, seraphic evangelists of Jesus Christ, went through this land, was not this the very song of Israel, "O God, arise, and let Thine enemies be scattered"? And shall it not be ours to-day? Let but God go forth with our arms; let Him but speak through our ministers; let Him but dwell in our elders; let Him but make the bodies of our Church-members His temples, and His enemies must be scattered, and they must consume away. I can well conceive that such a prayer as this well befits the tongue of a minister who lands as the first herald of the Cross in some barbarian land. Those brave men who risk all for Christ, not counting their lives dear unto them that they might finish their course with joy—methinks when they as pioneers for Christ bear the ark in the midst of the wilderness, they could not breathe a better prayer for themselves, and you and I cannot do better than put it up for them now, "Rise up, Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered; let them that hate Thee flee before Thee." **II. Now take the text in its reference to CHRIST.** Ah! methinks the sorrowing Church, when they beheld their Lord dragged by cruel men to judgment, when they heard Him accused and slandered, when they saw Him mocked and spit upon, must have considered the battle to be a defeat. The tears must have stood in their eyes when they saw that He who was to be the Deliverer of Israel could not deliver Himself. Was it not the day of hell's triumph, the hour of earth's despair, the moment of heaven's defeat? No; it was the reverse of all this. That moment when Christ died, He gave the death-blow to all His enemies. Even when the Master was laid in the tomb, and had to sleep there His three days as Jonah in the whale's belly, if the Church had had faith, they might have come early on the dawn of the first day in the week, and standing outside the tomb, they might have begun to sing, "Rise up, Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee." **III. WHAT MESSAGE HAS THIS TEXT FOR US, AND HOW MAY WE USE IT?** "Rise up, Lord! O God

the Father, rise up! Let Thy purposes be accomplished! O God the Son, rise up; show Thy wounds, and plead before Thy Father's face, and let Thy blood-bought ones be saved! Rise up, O God the Holy Ghost, with solemn awe, we do invoke Thee! Let those that have resisted Thee give way! Come, Thou, melt Thou the ice; dissolve the granite; let the adamant heart give way; cut Thou the iron sinew and bow Thou the stiff neck! Rise up, Lord, Father, Son, and Spirit, we can do nothing without Thee; but if Thou wilt arise, Thine enemies shall be scattered, and they that hate Thee shall flee before Thee." Will you and I go home and pray this prayer by ourselves, fervently laying hold upon the horns of God's altar? I charge you do not neglect this private duty. Pray for your children, your neighbours, your families, and your friends, and let your prayer be—"Rise up, Lord; rise up, Lord." Pray for this neighbourhood; pray for the dense darkness of Southwark, and Walworth, and Lambeth. And oh! if you cannot pray for others because your own needs come so strongly before your mind, remember, sinner, all thou needest is by faith to look to Christ, and then thou mayest say, "Rise up, Lord; scatter my doubts; kill my unbelief; drown my sins in Thy blood; let these Thine enemies be scattered; let them that hate Thee flee before Thee." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Church in motion and at rest*:—I. THE CHURCH IN MOTION, the Church militant. 1. This camp composed of Israel, is distinguished from the enemies around it. Though we are in the world, we are not to be of the world; though we are surrounded with Anakims and Canaanites, we are still to maintain the purity of the visible Israel of God, our being upon the march is a circumstance calculated to hinder the ungodly from joining us to a great degree. 2. It is marching through a wilderness of woe to a land of promise. Is their way long? Is their journey weary? Are their trials great? Are their enemies numerous? Do they often halt, and think they are upon the verge of Canaan, and that the next mandate of their Sovereign will be to enter in; and are they disappointed by finding that there are many other halting places, and many a weary journey lying between them and the Canaan of their rest? Yet are they moving toward it—at last the command will be heard by this individual, and the other tribe, to cease their wanderings, and to enter into glorious and eternal rest. 3. It is under the guidance of the Mediator. It is certainly not worse off now than it was then. Christ is our Guide. 4. When His Church moves forward, God rises up on its behalf. Every progressive movement of the Church of Christ, as well as of the individuals who compose it, is, in fact, directed and dictated by the Spirit of God. 5. The movement of the Church ought to be always, and upon the whole, progressive. 6. This progress will and must be attended with the defeat of the Church's enemies. We can win no ground except we win it from the foe; we cannot advance a single footstep in our onward journey except as we beat our enemies back. 7. The Church's triumphant march shall end in the complete destruction of all the enemies of God. II. THE CHURCH AT REST. We have seen it moving forward to that rest, and we have noticed that it sometimes enjoys temporary seasons of refreshment by the way, in different halting-places as it passes through the wilderness; and experiences the Divine protection and direction. But this rest is only tasted here below, and the foretaste of it is but designed to quicken the appetite of the people of God for their rest in glory. 1. As one feature of that rest, we observe, that there the true Israel shall be recognised, and the words shall be heard circulating through the happy host, "Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel." There, notwithstanding their multitudes, not one intruder shall be found to have entered in; there nothing shall enter that will destroy or that will even disturb in all God's holy mountain. However the mixed multitude may accompany us by the way, there must be a separation at the Jordan of death. 2. At that glorious period the Israel of God shall consist of thousands and thousands. 3. They shall then have triumphed gloriously. Enemies no more shall trouble them; the sound of war shall be a sound unheard; there shall be no more conflict with temptation, no more struggles with indwelling sin. Oh, to think of Canaan's rest only in this point of view! Believer, what a happy, what a heavenly rest it will be! (*W. H. Cooper.*) *Moses' prayer*:—Moses, the mouth of the congregation, lifts up a prayer, both at the removing and at the resting of the ark. Thus their going out and coming in were sanctified by prayer; and it is an example to us to begin and end every day's journey, and every day's work with prayer. 1. Here is his prayer when the ark set forward: "Rise up, Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered" (ver. 35). They were now in a desolate country, but they were marching towards an enemy's country; and their dependence was upon God for success and victory in their wars, as well as for directions and supply in the wilder-

ness. David used this prayer long after (Psa. lxxviii. 1); for he also fought the Lord's battles. Note—(1) There are those in the world that are enemies to God, and haters of Him. Secret and open enemies; enemies to His truths, His laws, His ordinances, His people. (2) The scattering and defeating of God's enemies is a thing to be earnestly desired and believingly expected by all the Lord's people. This prayer is a prophecy. Those that persist in rebellion against God are hastening towards their own ruin. (3) For the scattering and defeating of God's enemies, there needs no more but God's arising. When God arose to judgment, the work was soon done (Psa. lxxvi. 8, 9). "Rise, Lord, as the sun riseth to scatter the shadows of the night." Christ rising from the dead scattereth His enemies (Psa. lxxviii. 18). 2. His prayer when the ark rested (ver. 36). (1) That God would cause His people to rest. So some read it, "Return, O Lord, the many thousands of Israel; return them to their rest again after this fatigue." Thus it is said, "The Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest" (Isa. lxiii. 14). Thus he prays that God would give Israel success and victory abroad, and peace and tranquility at home. (2) That God Himself would take up His rest among them. So we read it, "Return to the thousands of Israel"; the ten thousand thousand, so the word is. Note—1. The Church of God is a great body; there are many thousands belonging to God's Israel. 2. We ought in our prayers to concern ourselves for this body. 3. The welfare and happiness of the Israel of God consists in the remaining presence of God among them. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*) *Protection and peace*.—There are here two prayers for different occasions: one for active life, the other for quiet rest. In both cases they are suitable and blessed. I. WE HAVE GOD FIGHTING OUR BATTLES. His enemies are ours, and He will indentify our struggles with His: 1. So far as we are going in the way of His commands. 2. So far as our actions are indentified with His will. If we are fighting for our own will, our own ambition, our own ideas, we cannot say, "Scatter Thy enemies." II. WE HAVE GOD PROTECTING OUR PERIODS OF REST. 1. "He slumbereth not nor sleepeth," and "to Him the darkness is as the day." 2. He never wearies nor is tired; hence there is nothing to hinder or prevent His constant care. (*Homilist.*) *The Church and its enemies*.—I. THE CHURCH OF GOD HAS HAD ENEMIES IN EVERY AGE. This is accounted for by—I. The favours they received. God has set His heart upon His people. This creates envy, which soon grows into opposition and mischief. 2. The principles they professed. 3. The expectations they cherished. II. THE ENEMIES OF THE CHURCH ARE CONSIDERED THE ENEMIES OF GOD. III. WHEN GOD RISES UP TO JUDGMENT, THE DESTRUCTION OF HIS ENEMIES IS EASY, TERRIBLE, AND COMPLETE. IV. THE CONSTANT ABODE OF GOD WITH HIS CHURCH IS AN OBJECT OF THEIR SUPREME DESIRE. 1. Let us learn from this passage the condescension and grace of God, in that He will dwell with us. 2. Let each of us inquire whether we are amongst the many thousands of Israel. 3. What comfort should this give to the Church amidst her many trials. 4. This subject affords to the enemies of the Church a motive for seeking reconciliation with God. (*G. Clayton, M.A.*) *The true soldier's convoy*.—I. GOD HIMSELF HATH MANY ENEMIES. II. AS GOD HATH ENEMIES, SO SOMETIMES HE SLEEPETH TO ALL THEIR ENMITY. III. THOUGH GOD SLEEPETH AND THEY WORK, YET THERE IS A TIME WHEN THEY SHALL BE SCATTERED; AND WHEN GOD ARISETH THEY ARE SCATTERED. IV. OUR PRAYERS AWAKEN GOD. V. WHEN THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND GO FORTH TO WAR, GOD'S PEOPLE SHOULD GO FORTH TO PRAYER. (*W. Budge, M.A.*) *The rising and the resting prayer*.—I. THE RISING PRAYER. Here is confession, that Israel's onward path was thronged with foes. It is so still, and so will always be. There is no hour when sword and shield may hang unused. Next Moses feels that his own might is nought; vain are his counsels, powerless is his arm. Therefore to God he flees. "Rise up, Lord." So now, if God's right hand be not our help the tide of foes must bear us down. But God is moved by opportunities of faith. "Rise up, Lord," is a cry which brings all heaven to aid. It puts sure victory on the wing. Observe here how the prayer of faith yearns for God's glory. "Let Thine enemies be scattered." These enemies hate God. They would impede the progress of His truth. They would extinguish His Word's light. They would cast down His righteous rule. Can faith sit still and see Him thus dethroned? Oh, no! It agonises with desire that He would vindicate His holy cause, uphold His honour, and add trophies to His name. "Rise up, Lord, and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee." II. THE RESTING PRAYER. The going forth would have been ruin except the Lord moved in the front. The rest will be no rest unless the Lord return. Prayer called Him to precede their steps. Prayer calls Him to abide around their resting tents.

Vast was the multitude. But what are numbers without God? His presence is their power, their peace, their joy, their glory, their strength, their fortress, their shield, and their repose. They know it, and they cry, "Return, O Lord." (*Dean Law.*) *Israel's hymn of rest*:—I. As we meditate upon these words we are reminded generally of THE EXERCISES OF EVENING DEVOTION. We connect this sentence with every individual who formed a part of that mighty host: we fancy that we hear these words whispering from the lips of every one as he enters his tent, and as he folds himself for rest. And then we connect it with the families, the tribes of the people, the groups of kindred, remote and intimate, in that singularly constituted nation, which, you know, consisted of one race—all were brothers by blood. And we connect it, further, with the congregation at large—the sum total of that great multitude that was numbered in the registration, Israel's Book of Life, as it was called. And so the sentence leads us to think of evening worship in three ways—in the closet, in the family, in the church. II. We are led to penetrate into that which forms the meaning, and essence, AND SPIRIT OF THE EXERCISES OF PRAISE AND PRAYER, at eventide, and at all times. We are brought immediately by prayer into the presence of God; we come into immediate contact and communion with His gracious Spirit! "Rise up, O Lord; let Thine enemies be scattered." There is significancy in that expression, "Rise up, O Lord!" And so there is in this other expression, equally figurative—"Return, O Lord." "Rise up, O Lord!" "Return, O Lord." Now, such expressions are properly explained as indicating, not an absolute fact in God's dealings, but in the perception and apprehension of God by man: not a Divine dispensation, but a human consciousness. God did not leave Israel in the day's march, no, not for an instant. We speak sometimes of the returning sunrise, and we speak sometimes of the returning sunset: but the fact is, that we return to them, and not they to us. The fact is, that it is the earth that is turning, and it is the sun that remains the same. And as it is with the sun, so it is with regard to God. Absolute change in us produces relative change in Him. As we cease to think of Him, apparently He leaves us; as we return to Him in thought, desire, and purpose, He seems to return to us in actual presence. The process is ever taking place in the history of spiritual consciousness. God and man meet when man prays to God as the day is over. God and His people hold communion as the shades of evening close in upon us at our evening devotions. III. THE TEXT SUGGESTS TO US THE THOUGHT OF THE PEACEFULNESS, AND THE SECURITY, AND THE JOY OF THOSE TO WHOM GOD THUS RETURNS. IV. We turn to this evening hymn again, and we observe THAT IT IS VERY LARGE-HEARTED—IT IS THOROUGHLY CATHOLIC. Here Moses takes up into that great heart of his the interests of all Israel—"the many thousands of Israel." Earnestly should we pray for ourselves, and with equal earnestness should we identify ourselves with the interests of others, and pray for them. An individual consciousness of moral individuality will be as a growing tree; it will be rooted in the heart, but up will it grow, and out will the branches shoot in this direction, and in that. The heart will be as a fountain, and there will come ever forth the bubbling waters, but they will flow, flow, flow, on and on, in irrigating streams, that will reach a thousand hearts. So let us throw thorough catholicity into our devotion. V. Last of all, we think of this hymn as what may be called THE EVENING HYMN OF LIFE. The last night will come, and we shall lie down to sleep in the grave! and oh! how beautiful then to be able, by faith, to lift up our hearts to heaven and say, "Return, O Lord, return unto me! I will return unto Thee! At the end of my life-long journey, my weary spirit would find rest in Thee! Receive me to Thyself." And while this prayer is offered by us on our own behalf, we are to take heed of the whole Israel of God, and pray, as we are passing out of time into eternity, that the love and care which we have so richly enjoyed, may be vouchsafed to those who follow us. (*J. Stoughton.*) "*Return, O Lord,*" &c.:—I. THE SUBJECTS OF THIS PRAYER. "Israel." What the thousands of Israel are not doing for themselves let us do for them. Let us make increasing prayers at the throne of Divine grace, that the veil may be taken away from their hearts, that, under the covenant of the blessed gospel, they may realise the promise of the Spirit unto the Churches (Rev. ii. 17). The thousands of Israel, tracing back their history, who were they? Looking at their present condition, what are they? And making castings into the future, what shall they be? 1. Who were they? They were the nation chosen from all the families of the earth, set apart (like the one day in seven) for the peculiar manifestation of the Divine attributes and glories. 2. Looking at their present condition, what are they? After struggling through persecutions, the fiercest and most appalling, after being the one common

curse and hissing of nations, divided amongst themselves by deadly antipathies, after their long and many trackings of tears and of blood, through all countries and lands, what are they now? Still shorn of their glories; still a by-word and a mockery; still the dispersed, the wandering, and the outcast. 3. But in our castings into the future, what shall they be? II. THE NATURE OF THIS PRAYER. Moses beheld the awful state of the people, as described in the first verse of the next chapter; and therefore he prayed to the Lord. And now the cloud of the Lord is before the Israelites; and now in the midst of them is the ark of the new covenant: and yet, as described in that verse, they are filled with sinful complaining, and the fire of the Lord is burning amongst them and consuming them; the just judgments of God are upon their heads because of their unbelief, and pride, and obduracy; and they are sinking beneath the fierceness of His anger. In this their condition it is the great business of Christ's Church to pray over them, that the Lord "return to the many thousands of Israel"—that by the manifestation of His Holy Spirit He show them the darkness of their natural minds—that by the strength of His Spirit He bring down their arrogancy to the dust—that by the penetrating influence of His Spirit He open a way into their hearts, that they may receive Christ as the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation. (*T. J. Judkin.*)

CHAPTER XI.

VERS. 1-3. The people complained.—*Against murmuring*.—I. A DISSATISFIED SPIRIT CAUSES DISPLEASURE TO THE LORD. 1. This we might infer from our own feelings, when dependents, children, servants, or receivers of alms are always grumbling. We grow weary of them, and angry with them. 2. In the case of men towards God it is much worse for them to murmur, since they deserve no good at His hands, but the reverse (*Lam. iii. 29; Psa. ciii. 10*). 3. In that case also it is a reflection upon the Lord's goodness, wisdom, truth, and power. 4. The evil lustings which attend the complaining proves its injurious character. We are ready for anything when we quarrel with God (*1 Cor. x. 5-12*). 5. God thinks so ill of it that His wrath burns, and chastisement is not long withheld. To set an imaginary value upon that which we have not—(1) Is foolish, childish, pettish. (2) Is injurious to ourselves, for it prevents our enjoying what we already have. (3) Is slanderous towards God, and ungrateful to Him. (4) Leads to rebellion, falsehood, envy, and all manner of sins. II. A DISSATISFIED SPIRIT FINDS NO PLEASURE FOR ITSELF EVEN WHEN ITS WISH IS FULFILLED. The Israelites had flesh in superabundance in answer to their foolish prayers, but—1. It was attended with leanness of soul (*Psa. cvi. 15*). 2. It brought satiety (*ver. 20*). 3. It caused death (*Psa. lxxviii. 31*). 4. It thus led to mourning on all sides. III. A DISSATISFIED SPIRIT SHOWS THAT THE MIND NEEDS REGULATING. Grace would put our desires in order, and keep our thoughts and affections in their proper places, thus—1. Content with such things as we have (*Heb. xiii. 5*). 2. Towards other things moderate in desire (*Prov. xxx. 8*). 3. Concerning earthly things which may be lacking, fully resigned (*Matt. xxvi. 39*). 4. First, and most eagerly, desiring God (*Psa. xlii. 2*). 5. Next, coveting earnestly the best gifts (*1 Cor. xii. 31*). 6. Following ever in love the more excellent way (*1 Cor. xii. 31*). (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Murmurings*.—1. Those who are merely hangers-on to a Church are usually the beginners of mischief among its members. So in the community, the men who have no stake in its welfare are always the most dangerous element of the population. They have nothing to lose in any event, and it is just possible that, in the confusion, they may gain a little. Thus they are always ready for either riot or *emeute*. The "mixed multitude" in our cities represents what others call the dangerous classes; and in proportion as their existence is ignored by the respectable portion of the people, and nothing is done for their education or elevation, the danger is aggravated. 2. Murmuring is invariably one-sided. These discontented Egyptians and Israelites did nothing but look back on Egypt; and even when they did that, they saw only the lights, and not the shadows. Again, in their depreciation of their present lot, they were equally one-sided. They could see in it nothing but the one fact that they had no flesh to eat. They took no notice of the manna, save to despise it; they said nothing of the water which God had provided for them; they

never spoke of the daily miracle that their clothes waxed not old; they made no reference to the constance guidance and presence of Jehovah with them. Now this was flagrantly unjust; and yet in condemning that it is to be feared that we are passing judgment upon ourselves, for if we were fully to reckon up both sides of the account would there ever be any murmuring among us at all? 3. God is always considerate of His faithful servants. See how tender He was to Moses here. He saw that he needed human sympathy and support, as well as Divine, and therefore He hastened to provide him with a cordon of kindred spirits, who might act as a breakwater, and keep the waves of trouble and discontent that rose in the camp from dashing upon him. One cannot read of this without being impressed by the tenderness of God; and it is a suggestive fact that on almost every occasion on which we are told of His judgment falling upon sinners, we have in the near vicinity some manifestation of gentleness to His friends. 4. The truly great man is never envious of others. Here is a lesson for all, and especially for ministers of the gospel. How hard it is to rejoice in the excellence of another, especially if he be in the same line with ourselves! And yet the disparagement of the gifts of another is really an indication of our consciousness of the weakness of our own. The highest and the hardest cliff to climb on the mountain of holiness is humility. 5. We can set no limits to the resources of God (ver. 23). 6. It is not good for us to get everything we desire (Psa. cv. 15). Prayers born out of murmuring are always dangerous. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *Sin and prayer*:—I. A SADLY COMMON SIN. Murmuring. Discontent is the spirit of this wicked world. II. A TERRIBLY SOLEMN FACT. God recognises and retributes sin. III. A GENERAL SOCIAL TENDENCY. The wicked ever seek the good in their terror and distress. IV. A STRIKING RESULT OF PRAYER. The breath of Moses' prayer extinguished the flame. (*Homilist.*) *Complaining of providence punished*:—The people complained—and the Lord set fire to them! That seems rough judgment, for what is man's speech as set against the Divine fire? Who can defend the procedure? Who can so subordinate his reason and his sense of right as to commend the justice of this tremendous punishment? So they might say who begin their Bible reading at the eleventh chapter of Numbers. Read the Book of Exodus, notably the fourteenth and following chapters up to the time of the giving of the law, and you will find complaint following complaint; and what was the Divine answer in that succession of reproaches? Was there fire? Did the Lord shake down the clouds upon the people and utterly overwhelm them with tokens of indignation? No. The Lord is full of tenderness and compassion—yea, infinite in piteousness and love is He; but there is a point when His Spirit can no longer strive with us, and when He must displace the persuasions of love by the anger and the judgment of fire. But this is not the whole case. The people were not complaining only. The word *complaint* may be so construed as to have everything taken out of it except the feeblest protest and the feeblest utterance of some personal desire. But this is not the historical meaning of the word *complaint* as it is found here. What happened between the instances we have quoted and the instance which is immediately before us? Until that question is answered the whole case is not before the mind for opinion or criticism. What, then, had taken place? The most momentous of all incidents. God had said through Moses to the people of Israel—Will you obey the law? And they stood to their feet, as it were, and answered in one unanimous voice—We will. So the people were wedded to their Lord at that great mountain altar; words of fealty and kinship and Godhood had been exchanged, and now these people that had oft complained and had then promised obedience, and had then sworn that they would have none other gods beside Jehovah, complained—went back to their evil ways; and the Lord, who takes out His sword last and only calls upon His fire in extremity, smote them—burned them. And this will He do to us if we trifle with our oaths, if we practise bad faith towards the altar, if we are guilty of malfeasance in the very sanctuary of God. Were the people content with complaining? They passed from complaining to lusting, saying, "Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt," &c. There is a philosophy here. You cannot stop short with complaining. Wickedness never plays a negative game. The man who first complains will next erect his appetite as a hostile force against the will of God. A marvellous thing is this, to recollect our lives through the medium of our appetites, to have old relishes return to the mouth, to have the palate stimulated by remembered sensations. The devil has many ways into the soul. The recollection of evil may prompt a desire for its repetition. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Israel's sin*:—1. Israel had many impediments

in their march to the Land of Promise, not only from without (Pharaoh pursuing, Amalek intercepting, &c.), but also from within, among themselves by their manifold murmurings (1 Pet. iv. 18). 2. God writes our sin upon our punishment. These murmurers here sinned against the "fiery law" (Deut. xxxiii. 2); therefore were they punished by fire out of the pillar of fire from whence the fiery law was given and published. Their perdition is our caution (1 Cor. x. 5, 11). 3. Evil company is infectious and catching as the plague (1 Cor. xv. 33). 4. Wherever there is sinning again on man's part, there will be punishing again on God's part (John v. 14). Here Israel sinned again with a double sin—(1) In desiring flesh which they wanted; (2) In disdaining manna which they enjoyed. The vehemence of their concupiscence was the more inflamed by remembering their former Egyptian diet, yet forgetting withal their Egyptian drudgery. 5. The people's profane deploring their penury (when they had little cause to do so, while fed with the food of angels) doth not only make God angry with them (ver. 10), but also putteth meek Moses into a pang of passion and impatience (vers. 11-15). 6. The Divine remedy to all this human malady; both as to Moses' impatience, and as to Israel's intemperance. (1) Moses must not bear the burden alone, but shall be assisted with the Sanhedrin, or great council of the Jews, consisting of seventy seniors (answerable to the seventy souls that descended with Jacob into Egypt) whereof Moses sat president, all endowed with the gifts of the spirit of Moses, who was as a candle that lighteth others, yet hath not less either heat or light than it had before (vers. 16, 17, 24, 25, 30). (2) As to the people's intemperance, as God promised and performed plenty of flesh to those fleshly-minded multitude, so He punished their impiety with a horrible plague at the close thereof (vers. 18, 19, 20, 31, 32, 33, 34). (*C. Ness.*) *The sin of complaining*:—Observe that it does not say that the people "murmured," but "complained," or, as it is in the margin, "were as it were complainers"; by which it is evidently meant that there was a feeling in their minds of scarcely expressed dissatisfaction. There was no sudden outbreak of murmuring, but the whispers and looks of discontent. There is no special mention of any particular reason for it. It does not say that their manna failed, or that any hostile army was arrayed against them. Doubtless the journeying was always wearisome, and on its fatigues they suffered their minds to dwell, forgetful of all the mercies vouchsafed them, and "complained." Now, we must all feel that right-down murmuring is very sinful, and in its worst forms most Christians overcome it; but not so complaining, for this seems to many to be scarcely wrong, and it often grows on them so gradually that they are seldom conscious of it. The causes of complaint are manifold. Little difficulties in our circumstances—little acts of selfishness in our neighbours; but complaining is most of all a danger with persons who have weak health—for weakness of body often produces depression of spirits—and this is the soil in which a complaining spirit takes deepest root. Then, too, it often grows into a habit; a tinge of discontent settles on the countenance, and the voice assumes a tone of complaint. And though this, like most habits, soon becomes unconscious, yet it is not the less mischievous on that account. • It is mischievous to our own souls, for it damps the work of the Spirit of God in our hearts, and enfeebles the spiritual life. It is mischievous in its effects upon others; for when Christians complain it gives the world altogether wrong impressions of the strength and consolation which the love of Christ affords, and it frequently generates the same spirit; one complains, and another, having the same or other causes of complaint, sees no reason why he should not complain too. And this was probably its history in Israel. It is scarcely likely that all began to complain at the same moment. Doubtless there were some who set the sad example, and then the hearts of all being predisposed, it spread like an epidemic. We should settle it well in our hearts that complaining, no less than murmuring, is a fruit of the flesh. David complained in *Psa. lxxvii. 3*, "I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed"; but he soon felt that the root of the evil was in himself. "This," he adds (ver. 10), "is my infirmity." But no part of Scripture proves more strikingly than the events at *Taberah*, how displeasing to God, and how dangerous in its results, a complaining spirit is. The punishment which followed, and which gave the name to the place, proves the first point. Patient and long-suffering as God ever was with Israel, we are told (*chap. xi. 1*) that "His anger was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp." The severity of the punishment shows that this was no little sin, encompassed as they were with mercy, and guided by Jehovah Himself through the wilderness. It was no less

dangerous in its result, for the subsequent history shows how "complaining" ripened into "murmuring," and murmuring was at last the cause of Israel's final fall. Let us endeavour, then, to watch against a "complaining spirit." In heavy and stunning afflictions we glorify God, when, like Aaron, we are enabled to "hold our peace." Like David, we can say, "I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because Thou didst it"; or, as in Psa. cxxxi. 2. Still more if we can, through grace, rise to the elevation of the afflicted Job, and say, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord"; or, if anything, to the still higher elevation of the Apostle Paul (Phil. iv. 11-13). In the lesser and more ordinary trials of daily life, its difficulties and its duties, we glorify Him by Christian cheerfulness; and how can we maintain this spirit but by tracing the hand of a Father in them all, carrying them all to God in prayer, and, most of all, by looking above present things to the "everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure"? For the things which are seen, our difficulties and our trials, are temporal; but the things which are not seen, our strength and our crown, are eternal. (*G. Wagner.*)

Ungrateful discontent:—We would think that beggar intolerably impudent, that coming to our doors to ask an alms, and when we have bestowed on him some broken bread and meat, yet (like those impudent persons the Psalmist speaks of, that grudge and grumble if they be not satisfied, if they have not their own will, and their own fill) he should not hold himself contented, unless he might have one of our best dishes from the table. But this is the case of very many amongst us. We come all as so many beggars to God's mercy-seat, and God gives us abundance of many good things, as life, liberty, health of body, &c., yet we cannot be quiet, nor think ourselves well, unless we be clothed in purple, and fare deliciously every day as such and such do, not considering in the meantime many that are below us, and above us too, wanting those things which we comfortably enjoy. (*J. Spencer.*)

Criticising favours:—There are many persons who receive favours and criticise them. They make it a ground and reason of fault-finding; as in the case of the man who found a Spanish coin worth eighteen and three-quarter cents, and turned it over in his hand and said, "Well, that is just my luck. If it had been anybody else that found it, it would have been a twenty-five cent piece." He had no thanks for what it was, but grumbled because it was not more. So it is with many men in the world. They are perpetually analysing and criticising the kindnesses that are done to them. They are not right in measure, or kind, or method; they are not right somehow; and they shut off the sense of obligation and refuse to be grateful. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Murmuring against God:—Murmuring is a quarrelling with God, and inveighing against Him (chap. xxi. 5). The murmurer saith interpretatively that God hath not dealt well with him, and that he hath deserved better from Him. The murmurer chargeth God with folly. This is the language, or rather blasphemy, of a murmuring spirit: God might have been a wiser and a better God. The murmurer is a mutineer. The Israelites are called in the same text "murmurers" and "rebels" (chap. xvii. 10); and is not rebellion as the sin of witchcraft? (1 Sam. xv. 23). Thou that art a murmurer art in the account of God as a witch, a sorcerer, as one that deals with the devil. This is a sin of the first magnitude. Murmuring often ends in cursing: Micah's mother fell to cursing when the talents of silver were taken away (Judges xvii. 2). So doth the murmurer when a part of his estate is taken away. Our murmuring is the devil's music; this is that sin which God cannot bear (chap. xiv. 27). It is a sin which whets the sword against a people; it is a land-destroying sin (1 Cor. x. 10). (*T. Watson.*)

Finding fault with God:—God hath much ado with us. Either we lack health, or quietness, or children, or wealth, or company, or ourselves in all these. It is a wonder the Israelites found not fault with the want of sauce to their quails, or with their old clothes, or their solitary way. Nature is moderate in her desires; but conceit is insatiable. (*Bp. Hall.*)

Losing temper with God:—Losing our temper with God is a more common thing in the spiritual life than many suppose. (*F. W. Faber.*)

Murmuring hurts not God, but wounds us:—I have read of Cæsar, that, having prepared a great feast for his nobles and friends, it fell out that the day appointed was so extremely foul that nothing could be done to the honour of their meeting; whereupon he was so displeased and enraged that he commanded all them that had bows to shoot up their arrows at Jupiter, their chief god, as in defiance of him for that rainy weather; which, when they did, their arrows fell short of heaven, and fell upon their own heads, so that many of them were very sorely wounded. So all our mutterings and murmurings, which are so many arrows shot at God

Himself, will return upon our own pates, or hearts; they reach not Him, but they will hit us; they hurt not Him, but they will wound us; therefore it is better to be mute than to murmur; it is dangerous to contend with one who is a consuming fire (Heb. xii. 29). (*Thomas Brooks.*) **The fire of the Lord burnt among them.**—*The worst fire*:—Nothing but mercies had come upon the back of their complainings before. They had had water, and they had had bread; but now the Lord would send them fire. It should be the fire of the Lord, holy fire; yet not as that, which, descending from heaven upon the altar, burnt continually before the Lord in His temple, acceptable in sacrifice; but a consuming fire; the burning of His wrath. It is bad to “be saved so as by fire,” to have all consumed, but ourselves, to be burnt out of house and home; yet far worse is it to be burnt out of the world. Still this might be the way to heaven for some, carried thither as in a chariot of fire. We know it was the way, the common way that martyrs went. The fire was kindled by their enemies; but it was not as the burning of Taberah; there was no ingredient of the wrath of the Almighty in the flame: but “one like unto the Son of Man” was there, to make it as the purest vestment of the soul, the involving element of love. Oh, there is a fire worse than all others, the burning of the Lord, a fire that descends to the bottomless pit, and the smoke of which has been seen. Behold it kindling in the camp of Israel. It had indignation in it; it was a consuming fire, lighted up in the righteous displeasure of heaven, its fuel the bodies of transgressors themselves. “The people complained.” What then? “It displeased the Lord; and His anger was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and consumed them in the uttermost parts of the camp.” There was no flying from it, it was a city in flames from its utmost extremities. Who can run from the presence of the Lord? How affecting this? It may be conceived, kindled by lightning from the cloud that had guided them, darting in angry form, and with the voice of the Almighty, in thunders impatient to be gone. Who can stand before the indignation of the Lord? who can abide His anger when the gathering storm of His displeasure breaks forth? His favour, what man that regards his life would not entreat? His wrath, what man that fears His power would not deprecate? He is to us, as what we are to Him—sinners or saints. This judgment had in it everything awful—cut off from all share in the promises, slain by the power that had kept them alive, and left heaps of wrath in the very way to life. (*W. Seaton.*)

Ver. 4. The mixt multitude.—*The mixed multitude*:—If Israel, according to its calling, be regarded as a type of the new man, then this “mixed multitude,” a remnant of Egypt, and influenced still by its spirit, will be a type of the old man in the believer. But we may take another view of Israel, and say that it is typical of those who walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit—the true members of Christ’s body, the living branches of the true vine; and then, corresponding with this, the “mixed multitude” will be a type of those who accompany the true Israel now, without being partakers of the Divine nature, and walking in the Spirit—the dead branches in the vine. History shows that the Church on earth has ever been made up of these two elements; and prophetic parables show that such will be its constitution until Jesus comes. The Word of God everywhere encourages the living members of Christ’s body, by patience, and gentleness, and unwearied zeal, to win those who have only a name to live. But it forbids them to take into their own hands the awful work of separation between the wheat and the tares, a work which the Searcher of hearts reserves to Himself alone. So that it need cause us no surprise, as it did the Donatists of old, and still does to some, that there is, and always will be, a “mixed multitude” associated with the true Israel. But though we are absolutely forbidden to cast out the element from the Church, this passage of Scripture may well impress us with the danger arising from it, and show how watchful we ought to be. Even if the Church were made up of true Christians only, there would be much evil in it, for the simple reason that there is so much sin in every heart. Many temptations may come to you even from those who are really Christ’s, and who are engaged, through grace, in crucifying the affections and lusts of the flesh; but others will come to you, as they did to Israel of old, from the “mixed multitude”; and what dangers in particular? Party spirit, we cannot fail to see, is one; but, oh, there is a greater and more subtle danger still—worldliness, conformity to the course of this world; and with it, forgetfulness of the high and holy calling wherewith we are called, and the adoption of a low standard of holiness. Our only safety is to set the perfect example of our Lord Jesus Christ before us; to

ask ourselves again and again throughout the day, "How would Christ act if He were in my place?" to crucify through the Spirit the root of worldliness within, and to watch all the avenues by which it can enter the heart from without. Only in this way can our own standard be elevated; only in this way avoid Israel's sin, that of being carried away by the worldly spirit which originated in the "mixed multitude" which sojourned with them. (*G. Wagner.*) Who shall give us flesh to eat?—*Wanton longings*:—See the wantonness and delicacy of sinful flesh, it must have this, it must have that to pamper and feed it in pleasure. What may be had is loathed, and what cannot be had, that is longed for, and nothing more than that. But very wisely doth the heathen Aristotle advise all men to look upon pleasures when they go, not when they come; for when they come with their faces towards us, they deceive us with a fair flattering show, but when they go and turn their backs, then cometh repentance, woe, and grief, not a little, many times. Just as the Spirit of God saith by the mouth of Solomon, "Even in laughing the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness"; that is, the allurements unto sin seemeth sweet, but the end thereof is destruction. Wanton pleasure is like the fire or flame of the candle, which shining bright delighteth a child, but when he hath put his finger into it, then it burneth, and the child crieth. By little and little groweth grief, but in the end it killeth, so stealingly pleasure creepeth upon us, but in the end overthroweth all love of virtue. Wilt thou live in a right fashion? Who would not? Then if virtue only can grant this to thee, stout and strong, tend this and omit pleasures. For they that will well defend a city, do not only watch what foes be without, but as warily they observe that there be no traitors within. So men and women that love virtue, they look to the gates, which are the outward senses, and they look within, to the inward affections, lest by the one, as by wickets, evil enter, lest by the other, as by torches lighted, fires and flames do follow. The epicure said to himself, "Eat, drink, play, for there is no pleasure after death." But well doth the poet before mentioned in an epistle tax him, saying, "Thou hast played enough, thou hast eaten enough and drank, it is time for thee now to go hence." As if he had said, "Part thou must in time with all thy pleasures and be gone, therefore think of it ere it be too late." Sardanapalus is said to have caused to be written on his grave to this effect: "What I did eat that I had, and what I left, that I lost." Which Cicero justly reprehendeth, saying, "What else should a man hath written upon an ox his grave? Pleasure infecteth and poisoneth all our senses, being a trim but a deceiving harlot; deceiving us by her voice, by her look, and by her attire, that is, every way." How many hath gluttony and the belly, how many hath filthy lust destroyed! (*Bp. Babington.*)

Vers. 5, 6. There is nothing at all, beside this manna.—*The manna despised*:—I. The complaining of the Israelites in this case was very REPREHENSIBLE, as it manifested a state of aggravated neglect of the peculiar circumstances in which the despised manna was provided for them. Their soul had been dying away for want of it, were we to believe their complaint, and now their soul was dying away when it was possessed. The manna seemed everything when they first beheld it strewn all around the camp, and now it was as nothing at all in their eyes. Nevertheless, it was of such value in the eyes of God, that a pot of it was kept in the ark of the covenant as a memorial of His kindness in providing it for the rebels. The children He feeds may forget the token of His goodness, but He does not forget the emanations of His bounty, or reckon anything small in the blessings He confers. II. The complaining of the Israelites in this case was all the more SINFUL, INASMUCH AS THE MANNA SO DESPISED WAS BOTH SUFFICIENT AND AGREEABLE FOOD—was all that they stood in need of in their journey, and more than they deserved. III. The complaining of the Israelites was all the more sinful, inasmuch as THE MANNA THEY SO DESPISED WAS PROVIDED FOR THEM WITHOUT COST OR LABOUR. And it is for a like reason that all despising of the bread of life will be accounted the greater transgression, for it is freely offered—without money and without price. No one is required to pay anything for it in silver or in gold—in bodily labour or mental suffering, or in any gift of worldly substance. No equivalent is looked for it in any sacrifice whatever that man can make. IV. The complaining of the Israelites was the more aggravated, as it INVOLVED A VERY SINFUL DISREGARD OF THE MIRACULOUS MANNER IN WHICH THE MANNA WAS DAILY SUPPLIED FOR THEIR USE. Alas! multitudes are as blind to the wonderful character of the spiritual or "hidden manna," as were the Jews in the instance here recorded, as to the manna provided for them. All the more that the miraculous character of the wonderful provision God has made for the salvation of the soul is

overlooked or despised, all the more of blind infatuation and sin are involved. It cannot be safe to speak slightly of an interposition, in providing for the life of immortal souls, into which, it is said, "the angels desire to look." (*J. Allan.*) *Speaking against God* :—These verses represent things sadly unhinged and out of order in Israel. Both the people and the prince uneasy. I. HERE IS THE PEOPLE FRETTING AND SPEAKING AGAINST GOD HIMSELF (as it is interpreted, *Psa. lxxviii. 19*), notwithstanding His glorious appearances both to them and for them. 1. Observe who were the criminals. (1) The mixed multitude began, "They fell a lusting" (*ver. 4*). These were the scabbed sheep that infected the flock, the leaven that leavened the whole lump. Note, a few factious, discontented, ill-natured people, may do a great deal of mischief in the best societies if great care be not taken to discountenance them. Such as these are an untoward generation, from which it is our wisdom to save ourselves (*Acts ii. 40*). (2) Even the children of Israel took the infection, so it follows (*ver. 4*). The holy seed joined themselves to the people of these abominations. This mixed multitude was not numbered with the children of Israel, but were set aside as people God made no account of. And yet the children of Israel, forgetting their own character and distinction, herded themselves with them, and learned their way; as if the scum and outcast of the camp were to be the privy counsellors of it. The children of Israel, a people near to God, and highly privileged, yet drawn into a rebellion against Him! Oh, how little honour hath God in the world, when even that people which He formed for Himself to show forth His praise were so much a dishonour to Him! Therefore let none think that their external professions and privileges will be their security either against Satan's temptations to sin, or against God's judgments for sin (*1 Cor. x. 1, 2, 12*). 2. What was the crime? They lusted and murmured. Though they were newly corrected for this sin, and many of them overthrown for it, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and the smell of the fire was still in their nostrils, yet they returned to it (*Prov. xxvii. 22*). We should not indulge ourselves in any desire which we cannot in faith turn into prayer, as we cannot, when we ask meat for our lust (*Psa. lxxviii. 18*). For this sin the anger of the Lord was kindled greatly against them; which is written for our admonition, that we should not lust after evil things, as they lusted (*1 Cor. x. 10*). Flesh is good food, and may lawfully be eaten; yet they are said to lust after evil things. What is lawful in itself becomes evil to us when it is what God doth not allot to us, and yet we eagerly desire it. II. MOSES HIMSELF, THOUGH SO MEEK AND GOOD A MAN, IS UNEASY UPON THIS OCCASION. Moses also was displeased. Now—1. It must be confessed that the provocation was very great. 2. Yet Moses expressed himself otherwise than became him upon this provocation, and came short of his duty both to God and Israel in these expostulations. (1) He undervalues the honour God had put upon him in making him the illustrious minister of His power and grace in the deliverance and conduct of that peculiar people, which might have been sufficient to balance the burden. (2) He complains too much of a sensible grievance, and lays too near his heart a little noise and fatigue. If he could not bear the toil of government, which was but running with the footmen, how would he bear the terrors of war, which was contending with horses? He might easily have furnished himself with considerations enough to enable him to slight their clamours and make nothing of them. (3) He magnifies his own performances, that all the burdens of the people lay upon him, whereas God Himself did, in effect, ease him of all the burden. (4) He is not so sensible as he ought to be of the obligation he lay under from the Divine commission and command, to do the utmost he could for this people, when he suggests, that because they were not the children of his body begotten, therefore he was not concerned to take a fatherly care of them, though God Himself, who might employ him as He pleased, had appointed him to be a father to them. (5) He takes too much to himself when he asks, "Whence should I have flesh to give them?" (*ver. 13*), as if he were the housekeeper, and not God. Moses gave them not the bread (*John vi. 34*). Nor was it expected that he should give them the flesh, but as an instrument in God's hand; and having assistants appointed him, who should be, as the apostle speaks (*1 Cor. xii. 28*), helps, governments, *i.e.*, helps in government, not at all to lessen or eclipse his honour, but to make the work more easy to him, and to bear the burden of the people with him. And that this provision might be both agreeable and really serviceable—(a) Moses is directed to nominate the persons (*ver. 16*). The people were too hot, and heady, and tumultuous, to be entrusted with the election. Moses must please himself in the choice, that he may not afterwards complain. (b) God promiseth to qualify them. If they were not found fit for the employ, they should be made fit,

else they might prove more a hindrance than a help to Moses (ver. 17). Though Moses had talked too boldly with God, yet God doth not therefore break off communion with him; He hears a great deal with us, and we must with one another. "I will come down (saith God) and talk with thee, when thou art more calm and composed; and I will take of the same spirit of wisdom, and piety, and courage that is upon thee, and put it upon them." Not that Moses had the less of the spirit for their sharing, nor that they were hereby made equal with him. Moses was still a nonsuch (Deut. xxxiv. 10). But they were clothed with a spirit of government proportionable to their place, and with a spirit of prophecy to evidence their Divine call to it, the government being a theocracy. Note—1. Those whom God employs in any service He qualifies for it; and those that are not in some measure qualified cannot think themselves duly called. 2. All good qualifications are from God; every perfect gift is from the Father of lights. Even the humour of the discontented people shall be gratified too, that every mouth may be stopped. They are bid to sanctify themselves (ver. 18), *i.e.*, to put themselves into a posture to receive such a proof of God's power as should be a token both of mercy and judgment. "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel" (Amos iv. 12). (1) God promiseth (shall I say?) He threatens rather, that they should have their belly-full of flesh. See here—(a) The vanity of all the delights of sense; they will cloy, but not satisfy. Spiritual pleasures are the contrary. As the world passes away, so do the lusts of it (1 John ii. 17). What was greedily coveted, in a little time comes to be nauseated. (b) What brutish sins (and worse than brutish) gluttony and drunkenness are. They put a force upon nature, and make that the sickness of the body which should be its health; they are sins that are their own punishments, and yet not the worst that attend them. (c) What a righteous thing it is with God to make that loathsome to men which they have inordinately lusted after. God could make them despise flesh as much as they had despised manna. (2) Moses objects the improbability of making good this word (vers. 21, 22). It is an objection like that which the disciples made (Mark viii. 4). He objects the number of the people, as if He that provided bread for them all could not by the same unlimited power provide flesh too. He reckons it must be the flesh either of beasts or fishes, because of them are the most bulky animals, little thinking that the flesh of birds, little birds, should serve the purpose. God sees not as men sees, but His thoughts are above ours. He objects the greediness of the people's desires in that word to suffice them. Note, even true and great believers sometimes find it hard to trust God under the discouragement of second causes, and against hope to believe in hope. Moses himself can scarce forbear saying, "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" when this was become the common cry. No doubt this was his infirmity. (3) God gives a short but sufficient answer to the objection in that question, "Is the Lord's hand waxed short?" (ver. 23). If Moses had remembered the years of the right hand of the Most High, he had not started all these difficulties. Therefore God minds him of them, intimating that this objection reflected upon the Divine power which he had been so often not only the witness, but the instrument of. Whatever our unbelieving hearts may suggest to the contrary, it is certain—(a) That God's hand is not short. His power cannot be restrained in the exerting of itself by anything but His own will; with Him nothing is impossible. That hand is not short which measures the waters, metes out the heavens (Isa. xl. 12), and grasps the winds (Prov. xxx. 4). (b) That it is not waxed short. He is as strong as ever He was; fainteth not, neither is weary. And this is sufficient to silence all our distrusts, when means fail us. Is anything too hard for the Lord? God here brings Moses to this first principle; sets him back in his lesson to learn the ancient name of God, the Lord God Almighty; and put the proof upon the issue, "Thou shalt see whether My word shall come to pass or not." This magnifies God's word above all His name, that His works never came short of it. If He speaks, it is done. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*) *Grumbling over spiritual food*:—The ancient Jews were, by no means, the only people who grumbled at the provision set before them. The Bread of Life, provided in the various ordinances of the gospel, for the strengthening of our souls, is not always received with thankfulness. Whatever rank we may choose to assign to preaching, among the other agencies for good, none can deny that it has its place, and an important one; and, yet, how many who listen to it, actuated by the complaining spirit of God's ancient people, presumptuously exclaim, "Our soul loatheth this light bread!" The manner of God's servant, and the message which he delivers, are both brought to the test of the most unsparing criticism. Imagine a prisoner, condemned to die, awaiting the day of his execution, when the door of the

cell opens, and the governor's deputy appears, bringing a pardon for him. The prisoner is overjoyed at this, but, instead of availing himself of the permission to depart, he stops to criticise the manner in which the deputy has discharged his duty. "Why did not the governor send a man of more ability?" he impatiently asks. "How can he expect me to listen to a message delivered in tones so harsh and discordant?" Has this pardoned criminal any just appreciation of the favour shown him? Very humble men, so far as worldly wisdom is concerned, often accomplish more, in teaching people "the good and the right way," than those who are learned in the schools. One who had been listening to the preaching of such a servant of God, asked, in surprise, "How is it that he always has something new to tell us?" The answer was, "Why, he lives so near the gates of heaven, that he hears a great many things which we who remain afar off know nothing about!" It is not the musical sound of the bell which assembles the large flocks of pigeons at noonday in the square of Old St. Mark's in Venice, but the liberal scattering of food. The complaint of the text is most often made with reference to what is called "doctrine preaching," and even those who enjoy sermons of another sort are ready to say, when matters of this kind are dwelt upon, "Our soul loatheth this light bread." God's truth, in the hands of the Holy Spirit (Eph. i. 17), is the great instrument for the world's sanctification. It is obvious, however, that this truth must take the shape of definite doctrine, and be expressed in becoming language, before it can accomplish this purpose. The Church and her ministers deal fairly with you; but are you dealing fairly with yourselves? You listen to preaching; but is it with the sincere desire that you may grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour? (*J. N. Norton, D.D.*) *Vehement longings wrongly indulged*:—But may not a good child of God, either in sickness or in health, lust for some meat more than another without offending God? Yes, indeed, for it is not the thing but the manner here that so much offended God; not the lusting, say again, but the fashion and circumstances of it. To wit, their presumptuous crossing the Lord's will when He appointed them manna from heaven to be their meat, for what He would they would not, and this was not fit. Again, this was not coldly done of them, but with heat and vehemency, giving as it were the reins to their lust, let God think what He would. Here was ingratitude for the Lord's gracious care of them, and most ungrateful speeches. Here was preferring onions and leeks and garlic, and such mean meats before the Lord's bounty and mercy from heaven, feeding them as never people were fed, with such other circumstances of very sinful and ill-behaviour. This is that offended God, which if we make use of we shall do well; for surely, though not altogether in like sort, yet much after this fashion, it is to be feared we provoke the Lord. Such meat as God sendeth us, being far better than we deserve, we cannot eat, but prefer that which is far worse before it, not without some proud and unthankful check to God's gracious providence and mercy for us and to us, giving us that which thousands as dearly bought with His Son's blood as we, and serving more than we, do want. And this not in any weakness of nature acknowledging gratefully the goodness of God set before us, but in very wantonness and delicacy, not once seeing or thinking of the bounty of God in giving us that we have. This if we do, it cannot be excused, but must needs be to God very displeasing, and to us very dangerous. Besides meat, how do many in other things tempt the Lord; as if God in mercy and most gracious care of them that they may be saved, and kept from the infections of this world, have given them a learned and painful pastor, that spendeth the Sabbath in holy exercises of his ministry, forenoon and afternoon, with the elders, with the children and servants. How doth this dislike many, and how lust they for worse things, breaking out in wicked speech: Oh, that we might have piping and dancing, quaffings and drinkings, church-ales and wakes, and such like as other parishes have! "We are cloyed with this manna, give us mirth and let them have manna that like it," &c. Do you not shrink to think what will be the end of this murmuring, and the punishment of this lusting? Certainly it is fearful, and I pray God Christian people may have the feeling of it before it be too late. (*Bp. Babington.*) *Grievances regarded more than mercies*:—When we enjoy good things, we look at the grievances which are mingled with the good, and forget the good; which when it is gone then we remember. The Israelites could remember their onions and garlic and forget their slavery. So because manna was present, they despised manna, and that upon one inconvenience it had; it was ordinary with them. (*R. Sibbes.*) *Murmuring a waste of time*:—Oh, the precious time that is buried in the grave of murmuring! When the murmurer should be praying, he is murmuring against the Lord; when

he should be hearing, he is murmuring against Divine providences ; when he should be reading, he is murmuring against instruments ; and in these and a thousand other ways do murmurers expend their precious time which some would redeem with a world. (*T. Brooks.*)

Vers. 10-15. Wherefore hast Thou afflicted Thy servant?—*The sufferings of the good in the path of duty*:—I. Look at the afflictions of godly men in the path of duty AS A FACT. 1. Good men suffer afflictions. 2. Good men suffer affliction in the path of duty. II. Look at the afflictions of godly men in the path of duty AS A PROBLEM. 1. A difficulty. Moses felt it. 2. Faith in the power of God to remove the difficulty. III. OFFER SOME HINTS TOWARDS THE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM. The afflictions of the good in the path of duty, under the blessing of God, tend—1. To test their faith. “Character,” says Dr. Huntington, “depends on inward strength. But this strength has two conditions ; it is increased only by being put forth, and it is tested only by some resistance. So, if the spiritual force or character in you is to be strong, it must be measured against some competition. It must enter into conflict with an antagonist. It must stand in comparison with something formidable enough to be a standard of its power. . . . Suffering, then, in some of its forms, must be introduced—the appointed minister, the great assayist—to put the genuineness of faith to the proof and purify it of its dross.” 2. To promote their perfection. “As the Perfect One reached His perfectness through suffering,” says Dr. Ferguson, “so it was with His servant. It was through the fire and the flame that the law of separation and refinement acted on the whole nature, and gave to it higher worth and glory. Trial ripened his manly spirit and made it patient to endure.” 3. To enhance their joy hereafter (*cf.* Matt. v. 10-12 ; Rom. viii. 17, 18 ; 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18 ; Rev. vii. 14-17). 4. To promote the good of the race. The Christian is called to “know the fellowship of Christ’s sufferings” —to suffer vicariously with Him that others may be saved and blessed. In the privilege of this high fellowship the sharpest sufferings become sacred and exalting services. Conclusion : 1. Severe afflictions in the path of duty are in full accord with the character of God. 2. Such sufferings are quite compatible with the favour of God towards us (*cf.* Heb. xii. 5-11). 3. When severe suffering leads to sore perplexity let us seek help of God (*cf.* Psa. lxxiii. 16, 17). (*W. Jones.*) *The burdens of leadership*:—I. THAT THE POSITION OF LEADER OR GOVERNOR OF MEN IS A VERY TRYING ONE. 1. Because of the responsible nature of the duties of leadership. 2. Because of the interest which the true leader takes in his charge. 3. Because of the intractableness of men. II. THE TRUE LEADER OF MEN MUST OFTEN BE PAINFULLY CONSCIOUS OF HIS INSUFFICIENCY. III. THE ABLEST AND HOLIEST LEADERS OF MEN SOMETIMES FAIL UNDER THE BURDENS OF THEIR POSITION. Conclusion : 1. Great honours involve great obligations. 2. A man may fail even in the strongest point of his character. Moses was pre-eminently meek, yet here he is petulant, &c. Therefore, “Watch thou in all things,” &c. 3. It is the duty of men not to increase, but if possible to lessen the difficulties and trials of leadership. (*Ibid.*) *Seeing afflictions from God’s standpoint*:—Christian friend, did you ever take your stand beside your God, and see what there is to be seen? Do so ; and it may be that, in your deprivations and disappointments, you will behold a wonderful and beautiful arrangement by which you can glorify God far better than by the gratification of your own selfish and earth-bound desires. Never were the Israelites better off than when they had just enough manna for the day, and not a morsel over ; and it may be you are richer and happier in your present condition than you could have been in any other. See if it be not so ! “I thank God !” said one, “that I lost my all ; for it has led me up into many blessed experiences with my God which I never knew while I was held down by the golden chain of worldly possessions. Then my affections were set on things on the earth, but now they rise to heaven.” If you see things from God’s standpoint your black trouble will appear fringed with brightness, relieving the monotonous darkness upon which you have fixed your steady gaze far too long already. Look at your prolonged affliction from this point of view, and you will discern secret fingers carving the delicate “lily work” which shall adorn you in the upper sanctuary, when you become a pillar in the temple of your God. It may be by the very method so distasteful to you, the cherubim of adoring reverence are being woven into the texture of your being. Yes, do see what there is to be seen, for in every dispensation there is the hand of a Divine purpose, full of love, and wisdom, and grace. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Afflictions may be full of mercies*:—In one of the German picture galleries is a painting called “Cloud-

land." It hangs at the end of a long gallery, and, at first sight, it looks like a huge, repulsive daub of confused colour, without form or comeliness. As you walk toward it the picture begins to take shape. It proves to be a mass of exquisite little cherub faces, like those at the head of the canvas in Raphael's "Madonna San Sisto." If you come close to the picture you see only an innumerable company of little angels and cherubims. How often the soul that is frightened by trials sees nothing but a confused and repulsive mass of broken expectations and crushed hopes! But if that soul, instead of fleeing away into unbelief and despair, would only draw up near to God, it would soon discover that the cloud was full of angels of mercy. In one cherub face it would see, "Whom I love, I chasten." Another angel would say, "All things work together for good to them that love God." (*T. L. Cuyler.*) *Affliction preferable to sin*:—Here are two guests come to my door; both of them ask to have a lodging with me. The one is called Affliction; he has a very grave voice, and a very heavy hand, and he looks at me with fierce eyes. The other is called Sin, and he is very soft-spoken, and very fair, and his words are softer than butter. Let me scan their faces, let me examine them as to their character, I must not be deceived by appearances. I will ask my two friends who would lodge with me, to open their hands. When my friend Affliction, with some little difficulty opens his hand, I find that, rough as it is, he carries a jewel inside it, and that he meant to leave that jewel at my house. But as for my soft-spoken friend Sin, when I force him to show me what that is which he hides in his sleeve, I find that it is a dagger with which he would have stabbed me. What shall I do, then, if I am wise? Why, I should be very glad if they would both be good enough to go and stop somewhere else, but if I must entertain one of the two, I would shut my door in the face of smooth-spoken Sin, and say to the rougher and uglier visitor, Affliction, "Come and stop with me, for may be God sent you as a messenger of mercy to my soul." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 16–20. *Gather unto Me seventy men of the elders.*—*The answer of God to the appeals of men.*—I. THE LORD'S ANSWER TO THE APPEAL OF HIS MUCH-TRIED SERVANT. 1. The number of the assistants. 2. Their selection. 3. The qualification imparted to them. II. THE LORD'S ANSWER TO THE APPEAL OF HIS PERVERSE PEOPLE. 1. Recognises the sinful character of their appeal. 2. Demands preparation for the granting of their appeal. 3. Promises the most abundant bestowment of that which they had so passionately and sinfully desired. Conclusion: Mark well—1. The disgusting nature of the sins of gluttony and drunkenness. 2. The necessity of firmly controlling carnal desires. Even those animal appetites which are lawful must be kept subordinate to higher things. 3. The necessity of submissiveness in prayer. (*W. Jones.*) *The seventy elders*:—I. THE CALLING OF THE SEVENTY ELDERS IS AN INSTANCE OF THE ORGANISING ACTION OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD. 1. A new want needed a remedy. 2. The remedy supplied. 3. The remedy for the want extraordinary. 4. The remedy had its counterpart in—(1) The mission of the seventy disciples. (2) The ordination of the seven deacons. II. THE HOLY SPIRIT STILL CARRIES ON THE SAME WORK. 1. The Church has new needs. She must pray as Moses prayed, and realising the presence of the Holy Ghost, set herself to meet these new demands on her energies, in scattered hamlet and crowded alley, where Christ Himself would come. 2. "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets!" Each Christian is a Spirit-bearer. Is he conscious of this dignity and responsibility? Each has his special gifts. (*W. Walters, M.A.*) *Helpers for Moses*:—A gracious God and most sweet Father is moved with the complaint and grief of His servant, pitying him and yielding presently helpers to bear this burden with him that he may have more comfort. Who would not joy in so sweet a judge, no sooner hearing but helping His servant oppressed with a froward charge. Be we faithful then in our places ever, and if we be too weak for them some way or other the Lord will help. These seventy men He will have furnished with His Spirit, never placing any to do a duty to whom He giveth not some measure of ability to do the same. But when it is said He will take off the Spirit which is upon Moses and put upon them, we may not think that He lessened His grace to Moses; but the meaning is, I will give to them of the same Spirit a portion, whereof I have distributed to him so great a measure; thine I will not diminish, and yet they shall have what shall be fit. (*Bp. Babington.*) *Dainties for the people*:—O sweet God! Moses will comfort by adding helpers unto him, and the people also He will satisfy in giving them flesh which they so lusted for, and that not ordinary flesh, nor gross meat, but quails, which to this day are

accounted dainties. And not for a meal or two, or a day or two, but a whole month together, &c. How sheweth this the truth of that Psalm which after in his time was made (Psa. l.). Nay, how sheweth this that whatsoever He will, that can He do both in heaven and earth; and therefore blessed is the man that putteth his trust in Him. Remember what you read in the holy gospel (Matt. vi. 25). What dearth so great, what penury so pinching, wherein the Lord cannot help us either ordinarily or extraordinarily? Can He thus glut His great host with dainty quails, and cannot He send you and yours bread? Fear not, but cleave unto Him fast, and even past hope if the case should be such, yet under hope believe all the Scriptures, and that He will never leave you succourless that openeth His hand and filleth all things with plenteousness. Only consider that many ways He ever exerciseth the faith of His children and their patience, whose duty is to bear with contentment what He sendeth, praying to Him to remember mercy, and to lay no more upon us than we are able to bear, as He hath promised, use such means as you can by just and honest labour or otherwise; and be assured, in goodness He will step in when He seeth time. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 23. *Is the Lord's hand waxed short?—God's challenge to the faith and co-operation of His people:—*I. THESE WORDS HAVE SPECIAL REFERENCE TO A DIVINELY-REVEALED PURPOSE WHICH STAGGERS HUMAN REASON. 1. Let us look at this purpose. "God hath sent His Son into the world, . . . that the world through Him might be saved." 2. The difficulties in the way of this gracious purpose, which excite men's fears. There is the inveterate carnality of the human heart, the stubborn resistance of the human will to the Divine; there is the stolid indifference of great masses in Christian lands to the practical duties and claims of religion; and the growing scepticism of the day regarding the verities of the gospel. Consider also the prevalence of idolatrous systems and heathen superstitions among great masses of mankind. Take also the subtle rationalism and keen-witted infidelity which prevail in civilised and semi-Christianised countries. It requires strong faith in a man to calmly survey this formidable host of evil in the world and then take his stand by the side of Christ, confident that His cause will triumph. II. WE HAVE IN THESE WORDS AN ASSERTION OF DIVINE POWER WHICH WARRANTS HUMAN CONFIDENCE. God's purpose is a promise. He stakes His character on the fulfilment of His Word. 1. He cannot forget. 2. He cannot fail through insincerity. 3. He cannot fail through inadequate power to perform. III. IN THESE WORDS WE HAVE GOD'S CHALLENGE TO THE EARNEST FAITH, PRAYER, AND CO-OPERATION OF HIS PEOPLE. 1. The true attitude of the Christian labourer or the Church is to stand, with one hand of believing prayer taking hold of God, and the other hand of loving labour taking hold of fallen man, that the fallen may be raised, and the lost saved. 2. When we are ready for a blessing, God will not fail to bestow it. (*John Innocent.*) *The glorious right hand of God:—*I. With regard to THE CHURCH AS A WHOLE, how often is it true that she so behaveth herself as if she had a question in her mind as to whether the Lord's hand had waxed short? The mass of us would be afraid to go out trusting in God to supply our needs. We should need first that everything should be prepared for us, and that the way should be paved; but we are not ready to leap as champions upon the wall of the citadel, leading the forlorn hope and planting the standard where it never stood before. No, we can follow in the track of others. We have few Careys and few Knibbs, few men who can go first and foremost saying, "This is God's cause; Jehovah is the only God, and in the name of the Eternal let the idols be abolished." Oh, for more anointed ones to preach the gospel believing in its intrinsic might, assured that where it is preached faithfully, the Spirit of God is never absent! O Zion! get thee up, get thee up! Count no more thy hosts, for their strength is thy weakness; measure no longer thy wealth, for thy wealth has often been thy poverty, and thy poverty thy wealth; think not of the learning or the eloquence of thy ministers and missionaries, for full often these things do but stand in the way of the Eternal God. But come thou forth in simple confidence in His promise, and thou shalt see whether He will not do according to His Word. II. WHEN BELIEVERS DOUBT THEIR GOD WITH REGARD TO PROVIDENCE, the question might well be asked of them, "Is the Lord's hand waxed short?" I do not doubt that I am speaking to some who have had many losses and crosses in their business. Instead of getting forward they are going back, and perhaps even bankruptcy stares them in the face. Or possibly, being hard-working men, they may have been long out of employment, and nothing seems now to be before their eyes but the starvation of themselves and

their little ones. It is hard to bear this. But dost thou doubt, O believer, dost thou doubt as to whether God will fulfil His promise wherein He said, "His place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure"? Thy God heareth the young ravens when they cry, and giveth liberally to all the creatures that His hands hath made, and will He forget His sons and His daughters—His people bought with blood, His own peculiar heritage? No; dare to believe Him now. His hand has not waxed short. Please not Satan, and vex not thyself by indulging any more those hard thoughts of Him. Say, "My Father, Thou wilt hear my cry; Thou wilt supply all my needs"; and according to thy faith, so shall it be done unto thee. III. There is a third way by which this question might be very naturally suggested, and that is WHEN A MAN WHO HAS FAITH IN CHRIST IS EXERCISED WITH DOUBTS AND FEARS WITH REGARD TO HIS OWN FINAL PERSISTENCE OR HIS OWN PRESENT ACCEPTANCE IN CHRIST. IV. This is a question which I may well ask of any here present who are CONVINCED OF SIN, BUT ARE AFRAID TO TRUST THEIR SOULS NOW, AT THIS VERY HOUR, IN THE HAND OF A LOVING SAVIOUR. "Oh, He cannot save me, I am so guilty, so callous! Could I repent as I ought, could I but feel as I ought, then He could save me; but I am naked and poor and miserable. How can He clothe, enrich, and bless me? I am cast out from His presence. I have grieved away His Spirit; I have sinned against light and knowledge—against mercy—against constant grace received. He cannot save me." "And the Lord said unto Moses, Is the Lord's hand waxed short? thou shalt see now whether My word shall come to pass unto thee or not." Did He not save the chief of sinners, Saul of Tarsus? Why, then, can He not save you? Is it not written, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son, cleanseth us from all sin"? Has that blood lost its efficacy? V. And you say, do you, THAT GOD WILL NOT AVENGE YOUR SINS UPON YOU, THAT YE MAY GO ON IN YOUR INIQUITIES AND YET MEET WITH NO PUNISHMENT; that ye may reject Christ and do it safely. Well, soul, "thou shalt see whether His word shall come to pass or not." But let me tell thee His hand is not waxed short; He is as strong to punish as when He bade the floods cover the earth; as powerful to avenge as when He rained hail out of heaven upon the cities of the plain. He is to-day as mighty to overtake and punish His enemies as when He sent the angel through the midst of Egypt, or afterwards smote the hosts of Sennacherib. Thou shalt see whether He will keep His word or not. Go on in the neglect of His great salvation; go to thy dying bed, and buoy thyself up with the false hope that there is no hereafter; but, sinner, thou shalt see; thou shalt see. This point in dispute shall not long be a matter of question to be cavilled at on the one side, and to be taught with tears on the other. (C. H. Spurgeon.) *A strange question* :—It is a singular thing that such a question as this should ever be asked at all: "Has the Lord's hand waxed short?" If we look anywhere and everywhere, apart from the conduct of man, there is nothing to suggest the suspicion. 1. Look to God's creation! Is there anything there which would make you say, "Is the Lord's hand waxed short?" What pillar of the heavens hath begun to reel? What curtain of the sky hath been rent or moth-eaten? Have the foundations of the earth begun to start? Hath the sun grown dim with age? or have the starry lamps flickered or gone out in darkness? Are there signs of decay to-day upon the face of God's creation? Have not howling tempests, the yawning ocean, and death-bearing hurricanes, asserted but yesterday their undiminished might? Say, is not the green earth as full of vitality, as ready to yield us harvests now, as it ever hath been? Do the showers fall less frequently? No; journey where you will, you will see God as potent upon the face of the earth, and in the very bowels of the globe, as He was when He first said, "Let there be light and there was light." There is nothing which would tempt us to the surmise or the suspicion that the Lord's hand hath waxed short. 2. And look ye too in providence; is there aught there that would suggest the question? Are not His prophecies still fulfilled? Does He not cause all things to work together for good? Do the cattle on a thousand hills low out to Him for hunger? Do you meet with the skeletons of birds that have fallen to the ground from famine? Doth He neglect to give to the fish their food, or do the sea-monsters die? Doth not God still open His hand and supply the want of every living thing? Is He less bounteous to-day than He was in the time of Adam? Is not the cornucopia still as full? Doth He not still scatter mercies with both His hands right lavishly? Are there any tokens in providence any more than in nature, that God's arm hath waxed short? 3. And look ye too in the matter of grace; is there any token in the work of grace that God's power is failing? Are not sinners still saved? Are

not profligates still reclaimed? Are not drunkards still uplifted from their sties to sit upon the throne with princes? Is not the Word of God still quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword? Where have ye seen the sword of the Lord snapped in twain? When hath God assayed to melt a heart and failed in the attempt? Which of His people has found the riches of His grace drained dry? Which of His children has had to mourn that the unsearchable riches of Christ had failed to supply his need? How is it, then, that such a question as this ever came from the lips of God Himself? What could there have been that should lead Him or any of His creatures to say, "Is the Lord's hand waxed short?" We answer, there is but one creature that God has made that ever doubts Him. The little sparrows doubt not: though they have no barn nor field, yet they sweetly sing at night as they go to their roosts, though they know not where to-morrow's meal shall be found. The very cattle trust Him; and even in days of drought, ye have seen them when they pant for thirst, how they expect the water; how the very first token of it makes them show in their very animal frame, by some dumb language, that they felt that God would not leave them to perish. The angels never doubt Him, nor the devils either: devils believe and tremble. But it was left for man, the most favoured of all creatures, to mistrust his God. This high, this black, this infamous sin of doubting the power and faithfulness of Jehovah, was reserved for the fallen race of rebellious Adam; and we alone, out of all the beings that God has ever fashioned, dishonour Him by unbelief and tarnish His honour by mistrust. (*Ibid.*) *No failure of power with God*:—Amongst all the gods of the heathen Jupiter was in the greatest esteem, as the father and king of gods and was called Jupiter, *quasi juvenis pater*, a helping father, yet (as the poets feign) he wept when he could not set Sarpedon at liberty; such was the imbecility and impotency of this master-god of the heathen. But the hand of our God is never shortened that it cannot help, He is ever able to relieve us, always ready to deliver us. Amongst all the gods there is none like unto Him, none can do like unto His works, He is God Omnipotent. (*J. Spencer.*)

Vers. 27-30. *Eldad and Medad do prophesy.*—*Eldad and Medad*:—Eldad and Medad seem instances of unlicensed preaching and prophesying; and this, at a time of scanty knowledge and rare spiritual illumination, was not without its dangers. So thought Joshua, and, jealous for Moses' supremacy, besought him to rebuke them. But the great prophet, wholly wanting in the thought of self, rebuked Joshua instead. "Enviest thou," he said, "for my sake?" and then added, in words of noble hyperbole, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets!" I. The first thought that occurs to us in reading this scene is THE GOOD, FELT BY THE GREATEST, OF ZEAL AND ENTHUSIASM. And the second is, how to discover it, how to encourage it in God's service. But then comes the further question, Have these men the prophet's capacity? Have they that primary want, the prophet's faith? Have they fire, perseverance, and courage? 1. The prophet's faith. Take away from the prophet this faith in the living God, speaking to him, teaching him, encouraging him, in the midst of life's sorrows and temptations, and he is nothing. Give him that belief, and his confidence, his courage is unshaken. 2. There is the prophet's belief in the moral order underlying the established order of things, as the only safe and sure foundation on which peace and prosperity in a nation can be built. II. The prophetic message, however varied its tone, however startling its communication, IS ALWAYS IN SUBSTANCE, AS OF OLD, THE SAME: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" III. Would that the people of the Lord were all prophets! WOULD THAT WE HAD ALL MORE OF THE FIRE OF ENTHUSIASM, leading us to go forth and act, and learn in acting, not waiting till we have solved all doubts or perfected some scheme of action! IV. ZEAL MAY OFTEN MAKE MISTAKES, BUT IT IS BETTER THAN NO ZEAL. Truth is not merely correctness, accuracy, the absence of error, nor even the knowledge of the laws of nature. It is also the recognition of the moral and spiritual bases of life, and the desire to promote and teach these among men. (*A. G. Butler, D.D.*) *Noble to the core*:—I do not agree with those who think that there was any diminution of the spirit that rested upon Moses. It is very difficult to speak of the subdivision of spirit. You cannot draw it off from one man to others, as you draw off water. The whole Spirit of God is in each man, waiting to fill him to the uttermost of his capacity. It seems to me, therefore, that nothing more is intended than to affirm that the seventy were "clothed upon" with the same kind of spiritual

force as that which rested upon Moses. For sixty-eight of them the power of utterance was only spasmodic and temporary. "They prophesied, but they did so no more." Emblems are they of those who, beneath some special influence like that which cast Saul down among the prophets, suddenly break out into speech and act, and give promises not destined to be fulfilled. Two, however, of the selected number, who, for some reason, had remained in the camp, suddenly became conscious of their reception of that same spirit, and they, too, broke out into prophecy and appeared to have continued to do so. Instantly a young man, jealous for the honour of Moses, carried to him the startling tidings, "Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp"; and as he heard the announcement Joshua, equally chivalrous, exclaimed, "My lord Moses, forbid them!" eliciting the magnificent answer, "Art thou jealous for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets—that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" It was as if he said, "Do you think that I alone am the channel through which the Divine influences can pour? Do you suppose that the supplies in the being of God are so meagre, that He must stint what He gives through me, when He gives through others? If it should please Him to create new stars, must He rob the sun of its light to give them brilliance? Is the gratification of a mean motive of vanity a matter of any moment to me, who have gazed on the face of God? Besides, what am I, or what is my position, amongst this people, compared with the benefit which would accrue to them, and the glory which would redound to God, if He did for each of them all that He has done for me?" This is the spirit of true magnanimity. A spirit of self aggrandisement is set on retaining its exclusive position as the sole depository of the Divine blessing, and this has the certain effect of forfeiting it, so that fresh supplies cease to pass through. There is no test more searching than this. Am I as eager for God's kingdom to come through others as through myself? And yet, in so far as we fall short of that position, do we not betray the earthly ingredients which have mingled, and mingle still, in our holy service? (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*)

Young men are ordinarily rash in judging others:—The doctrine from hence is that young men are ordinarily rash in judging others, yea, more rash than elder men, and consequently more apt to judge amiss, and to give evil counsel and sentence of such things as are well done. Such were Rehoboam's green heads; they gave green counsel, and such as cost him the loss of the greatest part of his kingdom (1 Kings xii. 8, 13, 14). The reasons are plain. First, age and years bring experience and ripeness of judgment and so wisdom. Youth is as green timber; age as that which is seasoned (Job. xxxii. 7). Again, their affections being hotter and stronger are more inconstant and unbridled, ready to run into extremities, as untamed heifers not used to the yoke. Lastly, they put far from them the evil day; they think themselves privileged by their age, and make account they have time enough hereafter to enter into better courses. The uses: 1. This teacheth us not to rest in the judgment, nor to follow the counsel of young men, except they have old men's gifts and graces in them. For touching gifts, it is true which Elihu testifieth (Job. xxxii. 9). 2. Let young men suffer their elders to speak before them, especially in censuring things that are strange. 3. Seeing rashness and unadvisedness are specially incident to youth, let them learn to season their years with the Word of God, let them make it their meditation, whereby they may repress such hot and hasty and headstrong passions. (*W. Attersoll.*)

Enviest thou for my sake?—*The increase of the Redeemer's kingdom*:—Moses had no share in the narrow feelings which Joshua had displayed, feelings of envy and jealousy. He had no wish to engross the distinctions of Israel, but, on the contrary, he would have greatly rejoiced had all the congregation been richly endowed from above, though he himself might have ceased to have been conspicuous in Israel. We consider that the lawgiver Moses, when so finely reproving Joshua for envying for his sake, is worthy of being admired and earnestly imitated; for that, in thus showing himself above all littleness of mind and contempt of this world, so that God might be magnified and His cause advanced, he reached a point of moral heroism—aye, far loftier than that at which he stood when, in the exercise of superhuman power, he bade darkness cover the land of Egypt, or the waters of the Red Sea divide before Israel. We are not bound to expatiate at any length on the magnanimity thus displayed by Moses. We have adopted the instance in order to show you how direct a parallel may be found in the history of the forerunner of our Lord, John the Baptist. So soon as the Saviour entered on the ministry, the great office of John was at an end. John still continued to baptize, and thus prepare men for the disclosures of that fuller revelation with which Christ was charged. In this way the

ministry of our Lord and that of His forerunner were for a while discharged together; though, inasmuch as Christ wrought miracles, and John did not, there was quickly, as might be expected, more attendance on the preaching of the Redeemer than on that of the Baptist. Now, this appears exactly the point when in truth John's disciples, who, like Joshua, were jealous of the honour of their Master, thought Jesus intrenching upon his province. But, however galling it might be to his followers thus to see their master neglected, to John himself it was matter of great gladness that He whom he had heralded was thus drawing all men towards Him. And the Baptist takes occasion to assure his disciples that what had moved their jealousy and displeasure was but the beginning—the first display of a growing spirit to which no bounds could be set. They were not to imagine that there could be any alteration in the relative positions of Jesus and John; nor that John would ever take that part of which, in strange forgetfulness of his own sayings, they seemed to wish to come to pass. On the contrary, he wished them distinctly to understand that, being only of earth—a mere man like one of themselves—he must decline in importance, and at length shrink altogether into insignificance. Whereas Christ, as coming from above, and therefore being above all—possessing a Divine nature as well as a human, and consequently liable to no decay—would go on discharging His high office, enlarging His sway according to the prediction of Isaiah, “To the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom.” And all this gradual fading away of himself, and this continued exaltation of Christ, the Baptist gathers into one powerful and comprehensive sentence, saying of our blessed Lord, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” And now consider more distinctly how character was here put to the proof; or in what respects either Moses or John deserve imitation. The truth is, that it is natural to all of us to envy the growing reputation of others; and to be jealous where it seems likely to trench upon our own. The courtier, for example, who has long sought to stand high in the favour of his sovereign; and who perceives that a younger candidate, who has just entered the field, is fast outstripping him, so that the probability is that he will soon be widely distanced; we cannot marvel if he regard the youthful competitor with irritated feelings in place of generously rejoicing in his rapid success. It would be a very fine instance of magnanimity if this courtier were to cede gracefully the place to his rival, and offer him, with marks of sincerity which could not be mistaken, his congratulations on having passed him in the race. But we could not look for such magnanimity. The case, however, is widely different when it is in the service of God, and not of an earthly king, that the two men engage. Here by the very nature of the service, the grand thing aimed at is the glory of God and not personal aggrandisement; and there is therefore ground for expecting that if God's glory be promoted, there will be gladness of heart in all Christians, whoever the agent who has been specially honoured. But, alas! for the infirmity of human nature; there is no room for questioning that even Christians can be jealous of each other, and feel it a sore trial when they are distanced and eclipsed in being instrumental in promoting Christianity. We are far enough from regarding it as a matter of course, that a veteran in the missionary work would feel contented and pleased at seeing that work which had gone on so slowly with himself, progress with amazing rapidity when undertaken by a younger labourer; on the contrary, arguing from the known tendencies of our nature, we assume that he must have had a hard battle with himself before he could really rejoice in the sudden advance of Christianity; and we should regard him as having won, through the assistance of Divine grace, a noble victory over some of the strongest cravings of the heart when he frankly bade the stripling, God speed! and rejoiced as he saw the idols fall prostrate before him. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *All God's people must beware of envy:—*Envy is an affection compounded of sorrow and malice. For such persons are malicious, always repining and grudging at the gifts of God bestowed upon others, and, as it were, look askint at them (as Gen. xxvi. 12–14, 27; xxx. 1; xxxi. 1; Mark ix. 38; John iii. 26, 27). 1. Because it is a fruit of the flesh (Gal. v. 21), as carnal grief and hatred are, of which it is compounded: for it maketh men repine at the prosperity of others, and that which is worst of all, to hate the persons that have those gifts. This appeareth in the Pharisees (Matt. xxvii. 18). 2. God bestoweth His gifts where He will, and to whom He will, and in what measure He will (Matt. xx. 15). 3. It procureth the wrath of God, and is never left without punishment, as appeareth in the next chapter, where Miriam, the sister of Moses, is stricken with the leprosy, because she envied the gifts of Moses; God showing thereby how greatly He detested this sin.

4. Whatsoever is bestowed upon any member, is bestowed upon the whole body (1 Cor. xii.). Whatsoever is given to any part, is giving for the benefit of the whole Church: why, then, should we envy any, seeing we have our portion in it? 5. It is a devilish vice; it is worse than fleshly, and yet if it were no more, it were sufficient to make us to detest it: and it transformeth us into the image of Satan, who envied the happiness of our first parents in the garden (Gen. iii. 5). So Cain was of that evil one (1 John iii. 12), and envied his brother, because God accepted him and his sacrifice (Gen. iv. 5). 6. It crosseth and controlleth the wisdom of God in the distribution of His gifts and graces, as if God had done them wrong and been too good to others: we can challenge nothing as due to ourselves, but whatsoever we have we have it freely: howbeit, the envious like not His administration, but dislike that others should enjoy that which they want. 7. It is against the rule of charity which rejoiceth at the good of others (1 Cor. xiii.), and is ready to bestow and communicate good things where is want of them. So, then, where envy is, there charity is not; and where charity is, there envy is not. Uses: 1. This teacheth us that all are subject to this evil, even they that are godly, and in a great measure sanctified, are apt to envy at others excelling in the graces of God. The best things are subject to be abused through our corruption. 2. It serveth to reprove many malicious persons: some envy others temporal blessings: others envy them the grace of God. If they have more knowledge than themselves they cannot abide them, but speak all manner of evil against them. Hence it is that Solomon opposeth envy and the fear of God as things that cannot possibly stand together (Prov. xxiii. 17), and in another place a sound heart and envy (Prov. xiv. 30). 3. Let us use all holy and sanctified means to prevent it, or to purge it away if it has seized upon us. Store of charity and humility tempered together will make a notable defence and preservative against this malady. (*W. Attersoll.*) *Needless envy*:—Moses wondered that Joshua should be so excited about this matter. He correctly estimated the young man's temper; he said, This is envy: why this envy, Joshua? is it for my sake that thou art making a grievous miscalculation of my spirit? do not be envious on my account. Contrast the spirit of Moses with the spirit of Joshua. From the greater expect more. Thus is the quality of men revealed. Our judgments are ourselves put into words. Not that this was necessarily what might be termed the most wicked jealousy or envy. There is a kind of envy that may be regarded as almost chivalrous. That may be the most dangerous envy of all. Let us get at the root of this matter. Moses certainly delivered himself from all imputations of the kind, for instead of wanting the prophecy to be confined to himself he would have it multiplied over the whole host of the people of God. Great men do not want to be great at the expense of others. The text, though an inquiry, is as much a revelation of the quality of Moses as it is of the quality of Joshua. The most dangerous envy is often envy by proxy. Two men are at deadly feud; circumstances arise which lead to explanation; explanation leads to adjustment; adjustment soon becomes hearty reconciliation; the two principals are satisfied. But what is all this tumult in the air? what all this petty criticism? The two principals are satisfied, but there are others that are fighting the battle over again, and professedly in the name of one of the reconciled men or the other. This is folly. We should rather anticipate reconciliation and make the most of it than say, through wickedness of heart, Though you may be satisfied, we are not, and we mean to continue the battle. That may be high temper, but it is the temper of the devil. Along the same line of illustration we come upon over-zeal. The Jehus rose up a million thick on the road. What are they doing? Converting men by force. They are going to stand this no longer; if men will not go to church, then they shall go to gaol; if men will not obey spontaneously, they shall obey coercively; they shall have no longer any parleying with the enemy. The only compulsion that is as everlasting as it is beneficent is the compulsion of persuasion. "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." Herein is the dignity and herein is the assured duration of the kingdom of Christ; it is a kingdom of light and love and truth and reason. Love is the everlasting—and I will add, is the invincible—law. What was Joshua's motive? Was he afraid that other men would rise and be as lofty as Moses? That was not the view which Moses himself took of the occasion. Moses was not afraid of competition. Moses proved his right to the leadership by the nobleness of his spirit. Would God that this proof of Divine election attended all our policy! No man can pull you down but yourself. Moses knew that what was lacking in appreciation of himself would be made up in proportion as the

people themselves became prophets. The more the people prophesied the more they would appreciate Moses. They would know what he had to bear; what occasional torment of soul. Have pity upon one another; believe, and be kind, and hope; let the devil do all the bad work, you get to your knees and to the work of brotherly sympathy and help. Moses saw what Joshua did not discern. Moses saw that it is part of the prophet's function to make other people prophets. Great men are not sent to create little men. Wherever there is a great prophet there will be a prophetic church; the whole level of life and thought will be elevated. Not that the leader can always command this kind of evidence and credential. It may come after his death. Some men have to die that they may be known. Great men are inspirations, not discouragements. That is the difference between real greatness and factitious greatness. Where there is real greatness it acts as an inspiration, as a welcome; there is a benign and generous hospitality about it. Real greatness can condescend without appearing to stoop; real greatness can be humble without being oppressive to those to whom it bows itself; real greatness encourages rising power just as the sun encourages every flower in the garden. The Church of Christ is not afraid of rival institutions. The Church says, "Enviest thou for my sake?"—nothing can put me down; I am founded by Christ, saith the Church, I am built upon a rock; the gates of hell cannot prevail against me—"Enviest thou for my sake?"—cease thine envying, it is wasted energy. We are building up all kinds of rival institutions, and yet the Church rises above them all. Let the Church have time and opportunity to utter her gospel and declare herself; and let her be faithful to her own charter, and all will be well. Truth always wins, and wins often at once; not in the palpable and vulgar way called winning, but by a subtle, profound, mysterious, eternal way that asks ages by which to justify its certainty and its completeness. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets.—*The prophet's work*:—The prophets were not mainly foretellers of future events, but interpreters and forthtellers of God's will; not minute historical soothsayers, but essentially patriots, statesmen, moral teachers, chosen vessels of spiritual revelation. In each of their duties they were great. As statesmen they were intensely practical, gloriously fearless; seeing that there was no distinction between national and individual morality; recognising that what is morally wrong can never be politically right. As patriots they were men of the people; pleading against oppression, robbery, and wrong; braving the anger of corrupted multitudes; reproving the crimes of guilty kings. As spiritual teachers they fostered in Israel the conviction of their lofty destiny by upholding the majesty of God's law, by preserving the authority of His worship, by pointing to the revelation of His Son. In each of these functions they have an eternal value for the human race. Every reformation has been effected by following in the path which they trod as pioneers. The Hebrew prophets were marked by three great characteristics—Heroic Faith, Unswerving Hope, and Absolute Belief in Righteousness. 1. I shall name their heroic faith. "All men have not faith." They either openly deny and disbelieve, or more often saying they believe act as though they did not. They are cowed by the power of wickedness, or tempted by its seductions. If they begin to make an effort for good, they fling up the contest as soon as they find that it will compromise their interests. Most often they will brave no danger, expose no falsehood, stand up against no wrong; they will spread their sails to every veering breeze; they will swim with the stream; they will look on success and popularity as the ends of living and the tests of truth. Not so the prophets. They will not be deceived by the vain shows of the world, nor seduced by its bribes, nor blunt the edge of their moral sense with its manifold conventions. Terror will not daunt, nor flattery lure them. Through lives of loss and persecution they will go on with an intense and quiet perseverance, which no success will cause them to relax, and no reverse subdue. They will devote every energy and possession to the cause of God, and the service of the most helpless of mankind. 2. They saw beyond. Over and around them towered the colossal kingdoms of the heathen. The giant forms of empires around them were but on their way to ruin, because they were not founded on righteousness. Kings, priests and mobs might be against them; they were but vain and idle men (*Jer. i. 17-19*). And if they had the faith which looked beyond the little grandeurs of men, they also had the hope which looked beyond their sorrows, and this hope spread outwards in ever-widening circles. Amid the apostasy of Israel they always prophesied that Israel should not be utterly destroyed. And this hope was concentrated in their greatest and most unflinching prophecy of an Anointed Deliverer, a coming Saviour for all mankind:

a Man who should be "a hiding-place from the wind; and a covert from the tempest; the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." 3. The third great characteristic of the Hebrew prophets is their sense that the very end and aim of all religion is simply righteousness: that there is an abysmal difference between a mere correct worship and a living faith. Such was the spirit of the prophets. Let us conclude by considering the way in which we too, in our measure, are called to share in their spirit, and to continue their work. (1) We must try to do so, first, by escaping the average. He who has an unswerving faith in a few great moral principles to which, through evil report and good report, he clings; he who will only look on opinions and practices as he believes they must appear in the sight and before the tribunal of God; he who in politics knows no principle but truth and right; he who in the path of duty is indifferent to human praise or human blame; he who will stand firm when others fail; he who because the house of his life is built on a rock will do what God has given him to do, and say what God has given him to say, holding his own against chances and accidents, against popular clamour and popular favour, against the anger and prejudices of the circle among whom he moves, that is the true prophet, that is the strong Christian man. (2) And as ours should be the aim of the prophet, ours should be the qualities of his mind and heart. Something at least we must have of their enthusiasm, something of their devotion, something of their indignation against wrong; something, too, of their courage. (*Archdeacon Farrar.*) *God calls all His people to be prophets:*—As of old, He calls His Gideon from the threshing-floor, and His Amos from the sycamore fruit; His Moses from the flocks; His Matthew from the receipt of custom; His John from the priestly family; His Peter from the fishing-net, and His Paul from the rabbi's school; so now He calls us from the farm and from the merchandise, from the shop and from the office, from the profession and from the trade, from the priest's pulpit and from the servants' hall. He calls us in boyhood, He calls us in manhood, He calls us in old age. In His sight there is not an inch-high difference between the stage on which the prince and the stage on which the pauper plays his part. Both alike are called, and called only to be good men and true, brave and faithful. Both have a like mission, and both alike shall, if they do Christ's work, receive His hundred-fold reward. The boy at school who will not join in the bad language of his companions; the soldier in the barracks who will kneel down and pray, though all his comrades jeer; the tradesman who will hold out against a dishonest custom of his guild; the tenant who in the teeth of his interests will give his vote at the dictates of conscience; the Churchman who for truth's sake will try to break the tyrannous fetters of false opinion; the philanthropist who will bear the unscrupulous taunts of the base, because he denounces a nation's guilt—these, too, have in them something of the prophet. They help to save the world from corruption and society from spiritual death. This was the example that Christ set us all. That man is most a prophet of Christ who loves Him best. And he loves Him best who keeps His commandments. His commandments were but two: Love God; Love one another. (*Ibid.*)

Monopoly and freedom in religious teaching:—I. A PROTEST AGAINST MONOPOLY IN RELIGIOUS TEACHING. 1. The prevalence of this monopoly. 2. The causes of this monopoly. (1) Love of power. (2) The love of money. 3. The iniquity of this monopoly. What arrogance! Is not one mind as near the fountain of knowledge, the source of inspiration, as another? II. AN AUTHORITY FOR FREEDOM IN RELIGIOUS TEACHING. 1. All the Lord's people ought to be teachers. The possession of superior knowledge implies the obligation to disseminate it. 2. All the Lord's people might be teachers. All that is wanted is "that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them"; and this Spirit is free alike to all. (*Homilist.*) *The Spirit given to all:*—"Would God," was the longing of Moses, "that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" His desire was fulfilled at Pentecost, and is realised now. Every believer possesses the Holy Spirit, not for his own spiritual life only, but to be a witness for Christ, as were the hundred and twenty at Pentecost. Equally does the charge to publish the glad tidings, and the promise of adequate power come to every one, according to that closing command of inspiration, "Let him that heareth say, Come!" Nay, more, the tongue of fire, the gift of utterance in its fitting measure, is always bestowed upon the kindled heart. Every one who seeks humbly and prayerfully to be a witness for Christ, in the home, in the ways of toil, in the spheres of intercourse, in the house of prayer, by the printed page, with the lips, and by the life, every such faithful disciple of the living Master shall receive His promised gift,

the Pentecostal power of the Holy Ghost! (*J. G. Butler, D.D.*) *Divine inspiration*:—In different forms and in different degrees that noble wish was fulfilled. The acts of the hero, the songs of the poet, the skill of the artificer, Samson's strength, the music of David, the architecture of Bezaleel and Solomon, are all ascribed to the inspiration of the Divine Spirit. It was not a holy tribe, but holy men of every tribe, that spake as they were moved, carried to and fro out of themselves, by the Spirit of God. The prophets, of whom this might be said, in the strictest sense, were confined to no family or caste, station, or sex. They rose, indeed, above their countrymen; their words were to their countrymen, in a peculiar sense, the words of God. But they were to be found everywhere. Like the springs of their own land, there was no hill or valley where the prophetic gift might not be expected to break forth. Miriam and Deborah, no less than Moses and Barak; in Judah and in Ephraim, no less than in Levi; in Tekoah and Gilead, and, as the climax of all, in Nazareth, no less than in Shiloh and Jerusalem, God's present counsel might be looked for. By this constant attitude of expectation, if one may so call it, the ears of the whole nation were kept open for the intimations of the Divine Ruler, under whom they lived. None knew beforehand who would be called. . . . In the dead of night, as to Samuel; in the ploughing of the field, as to Elisha: in the gathering of the sycamore figs, as to Amos; the call might come. . . . Moses was but the beginning; he was not, he could not be the end. (*Dean Stanley.*)

Vers. 31-35. They gathered the quails.—*The quails*:—I. ISRAEL'S COMPLAINT. 1. Its object was food. 2. Its nature was intense. "Fell a lusting." 3. It was general. 4. It was accompanied with tears. A faint, weary, disappointed people. Tears, chiefly, of discontent. 5. It was associated with the retrospections of memory. "We remember," &c. (ver. 5). They should also have remembered some other things of that past. Their bondage, &c. 6. It made present things distasteful. "There is nothing at all." There was a time when they did not call the manna nothing. Longing for what we have not tends to cause disparagement of things possessed. II. MOSES' PERPLEXITY. Great popular leaders have often been perplexed by the unreasonable clamours of their followers. Have often been urged farther than their greater prudence and wisdom would have chosen. People have often damaged their own cause by exorbitant demands. 1. Moses displeased at the position in which he found himself. "My wretchedness" (ver. 15). His faith faltered (ver. 11, 12). Especially displeased with the people (ver. 10). 2. In his perplexity cried to the Lord. A good example. God "a present help in trouble." 3. He acknowledges his own weakness (vers. 21, 22). He could not feed the people. It would be suicidal to kill the flocks and herds, even if they were enough. Needed for sacrifice; and the religious well-being of the people of most importance. 4. He receives comfort and direction (ver. 23). III. GOD'S PROVIDENCE. Nature is His storehouse, in which He has garnered food for man and beast. He made all living things. Endowed them with habits and instincts. Made the quails. Ordained their migratory habits. Made and ruled the winds. When the quails came, the wind was ready. It fulfilled the word of God. The wonderful flight of birds. The scene in the camp. What was sent so abundantly seems to have been thanklessly received. Divine anger went with the gift. Many of the people died. Learn—1. To pray for the blessing of contentment. 2. To seek the moderation of our desires. 3. To pray for grateful hearts. 4. To acknowledge the hand of God in the supply of our wants. 5. To be chiefly anxious for the supply of spiritual need. (*J. C. Gray.*) *The graves of lust*:—I. THERE ARE PERPETUAL RESURRECTIONS OF EASILY BESETTING SINS. 1. The side from which the temptation came to them (vers. 4-6). This mixed multitude corresponds precisely to the troop of disorderly passions and appetites, with which we suffer ourselves to march through the desert of life. Passions, desires, ever mad for indulgence, and reckless, scornful of Divine law. 2. The special season when the easily besetting sin rose up and again made them its slave. It is a fact which all close students of human character must have observed, that there is a back-water of temptation, if I may so speak, which is more deadly than its direct assaults. You may fight hard against a temptation, and fight victoriously. You may beat it off, and then, when, weary with the conflict, you suffer the strain of vigilance to relax, it shall steal in and easily master the citadel, which lately it spent all its force in vain to win. Beware of your best moments, as well as of your worst; or rather the moments which succeed the best. They are the most perilous of all. II. There comes a point in the history of the indulgence of

besetting sins, when GOD CEASES TO STRIVE WITH US AND FOR US AGAINST THEM, AND LETS THEM HAVE THEIR WAY. 1. God has great patience with the weaknesses and sins of the flesh. But it is a dreadful mistake to suppose that therefore He thinks lightly of them. He regards them as sins that must be conquered, and, no matter by what sharp discipline, extirpated and killed. He knows that, if tolerated, they become the most deadly of spiritual evils, and rot body and spirit together in hell. 2. Hence all the severer discipline by which the Lord seeks to purge them, the various agencies by which He fights with us and for us against their tyrannous power. What is life but one long discipline of God for the cleansing of the flesh? Are not the after-pains of departed sensual joys among its chief stings and thorns? 3. Left alone by God. God does not curse us; He leaves us to ourselves; that is curse enough, and from that curse what arm can save us! We will have it, and we shall have it. We leap through all the barriers which He has raised around us to limit us, yea, though they be rings of blazing fire, we will through them and indulge our lust; and in a moment He sweeps them all out of our path—perhaps roses spring to beguile, where flames so lately blazed to warn. III. THE END OF THAT WAY IS, INEVITABLY AND SPEEDILY, A GRAVE. The grave of lust is one of the most awful of the inscriptions on the headstones of the great cemetery, the world. In how many do we now search in vain for fruits whose flowers once bloomed there; for generous emotions, swift responses to the appeals of sorrow, unselfish ministries, and stern integrity? How many have learnt now to laugh at emotions which once had a holy beauty in their sight; to fence skilfully with appeals which once would have thrilled to the very core of their hearts; to grasp at advantages which once they would have passed with a scornful anathema, and to clutch at the gold which was once the glad instrument of diffusing benefits around! Yes! there are graves enough around us—graves of passion, graves of self-will, graves of lust. Beware, young men; young women, beware! Beware! for the dead things buried in these graves will not lie quiet; they stir and start, and ever and anon come forth in their ghastly shrouds and scare you at your feasts. No ghosts so sure to haunt their graves as the ghosts of immolated faculties and violated vows. The memories which haunt the worn-out worldling's bed of impotence or lust are the true avengers of Heaven. The brain loses power to repel them, but retains power to fashion them. Once it could drive away thoughts and memories; now it can only retain them, and fix them in a horrid permanent session on their thrones. (*J. B. Brown, B.A.*)

The Israelites' sin and punishment.—I. THEIR SIN many consider a trifle. Certainly it was not of that character which the judgment inflicted on them would lead us to anticipate. We read here of no enormous transgression, or daring violation of God's law. All they were guilty of, was a strong desire for something which God had not given them. "Something evil," you will say perhaps, but not so; it was one of the most harmless things they could have desired. The Lord had provided them with manna for their support; they were weary of manna and wanted flesh. "The children of Israel," we read, "wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?"

1. You see, then, the nature of the sin we have before us. It is a sin of the heart—coveting, desiring; and that not slightly, but very eagerly, with the full bent of the mind. It is not spiritual idolatry, though it is like it. That is making too much of what we have; this is making too much of what we want. 2. Look at the cause or spring of Israel's sin. Their desire for flesh was a desire springing up amidst abundance. It had its origin, not in their necessities, but in their vile affections, their own unsubdued, carnal minds. 3. Observe next the occasion of Israel's sin. Oh, dread the mixed multitude. Stand in fear of worldly-minded professors of Christ's gospel. They will teach you to lust for the things you now despise. They will drive, if not the fear, yet the peace of God from your hearts, and all they will give you in exchange for it will be a craving, aching soul, a share in their own restlessness and discontent. 4. Mark the effect of their sin, its immediate effect, I mean, on their own minds. It made them completely wretched. The truth is, the mind of man cannot long bear a strong and unchecked desire. It must be gratified or have a prospect of being gratified, or it consumes the soul. Perhaps we may say, this is one main ingredient in the misery of hell—a longing, and a longing, and a longing still, for something that can be never had. 5. Notice one thing more in this craving of the Israelites—its sinfulness or guilt. Wherein, then, did its sinfulness lie? In the twentieth verse, God tells us. He pronounces it a contempt of Himself. Moses is commanded to go to the weeping people, and say to them, "Ye have despised the Lord which is among you." And how had they despised Him? In three respects. 1. They had low thoughts of His power. "Who," they asked,

“shall give us flesh to eat?” Who can give it? 2. And their conduct involved in it a making light of His goodness. They had evidently lost sight at this time of all He had done for them, or if not so, they lightly esteemed what He had done. 3. And then there was also here a despising of God’s authority. II. Look at THE CONDUCT OF THEIR INSULTED GOD TOWARDS THEM IN CONSEQUENCE OF THEIR SIN. 1. He granted their desire. We are told again and again that it displeased Him, that His anger was kindled greatly against the people on account of it; but how does He show His displeasure? He begins with giving them the very thing they wish for; He works a miracle to give it them; He gives it them to the utmost extent of their desires, and beyond them. But what was God really doing all this while? He was only vindicating His aspersed honour. 2. The Lord took vengeance on these Israelites, and this in a fearful manner and at a very remarkable time. It is often the will of God to make our sin our punishment. We eagerly crave something; He gives us what we crave, and when we have it, He either takes away from us all our delight in it, and so bitterly disappoints us, or else He causes it to prove to us a source of misery. (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *The judgments of God sometimes come very suddenly*:—In the midst of their lusts and pleasures, behold how God’s judgments come upon them. They had feasted a long time, and had glutted themselves with their flesh; now their sweet meat had sour sauce. The doctrine arising from hence is this, that the judgments of God do oftentimes fall upon men and women very suddenly before they be aware, when they least of all think or imagine of the day of wrath (*Job. xx. 5–7, xxi. 17; Psa. lxxiii. 19; Isa. xxx. 13; Exod. xii. 29; Dan. v. 30; Luke xii. 20*). The destruction of the wicked shall come as a whirlwind (*Amos i. 14*). 1. This is plain, because they have through God’s long-suffering increased the number, weight, and measure of their sins, and thereby compel the Lord to bring His judgments suddenly upon them. 2. God respecteth herein the benefit of others toward whom He hath not used as yet so long patience, to the end that they, seeing others fall into sudden destruction, may learn thereby not to abuse His patience, lest they also be suddenly destroyed (*Dan. v. 22*). The uses follow. 1. See from hence the happy estate of all such as think of the day of their reckoning betimes, and prepare their garments that they be not taken naked. Such are out of danger, and have no cause to fear wrath and judgment. 2. It serveth to teach us that we should not envy at the peace and prosperity of the wicked, neither fret at the flourishing estate of the ungodly that live in their sins, for howsoever they be for a time forborne, yet thereby they are the more hardened in their sins, till a far greater judgment come upon them. Therefore envy not at them though they grow great, for suddenly shall the judgments of God take hold upon them, and arrest them as guilty of death, and then they shall perish speedily; so that there is no reason to grieve or grudge at their prosperity. 3. From hence ariseth comfort to the faithful. 4. It is our duty to watch and attend with all care for the time of judgment. (*W. Attersoll.*) *The graves of lust*:—I. IT IS THE TENDENCY OF LUST TO SHORTEN LIFE AND TO BRING MEN TO AN UNTIMELY GRAVE. Our animal desires are good servants; but, when they gain the mastery, they are fearful tyrants, loading the conscience with guilt and the body with disease, ruining life, and making eternity a hell. The Romans, it is said, held their funerals at the Gate of Venus, to teach that lust shortens life. The pleasures of sin are dearly bought. II. LET US RECORD SOME OF OUR FEELINGS AS WE CONTEMPLATE “THE GRAVES OF LUST.” 1. The one is of intense pity, that man should be so foolish as to live in sin when he knew how it would end; that life should be so wasted, and opportunities lost, &c. 2. The other is of awful solemnity. He is gone; but whither? He has given up the ghost; but where is he? Let us all—1. Ascertain whether or no we are on the way to this grave. 2. Resolve through the help of God that we will not be there. Seek Jesus Christ. He, and He only, can rescue us from the power, the curse, and the consequences of sin. (*David Lloyd.*) *Inordinate desires*:—What we inordinately desire, if we obtain it, we have reason to fear that it will be some way or other a grief and cross to us. God sufficed them first, and then plagued them. 1. To save the reputation of His own power, that it might not be said, He had cut them off because He was not able to suffice them. And—2. To show us the meaning of the prosperity of sinners; it is their preparation for ruin. They are fed as an ox for the slaughter. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*) *Graves of desire*:—The last thing that most people would desire is a grave, and yet how often does desire conduct to death! We will notice several manifestations of irregular and destructive desire, and, in conclusion, show how desire may be directed and chastened. I. There is UNSEASONABLE DESIRE. The desire of the people for

flesh was not unnatural, not illegal in itself, but it was unseasonable. This is a common fault of ours, to desire legitimate things in times and places which are not convenient. 1. There is the impatience of youth. The course of life with many in these times reminds us of the days when we were lads, and when in the early morning we went a distance to school, taking our dinner with us; then appetite was keen, and it was no unusual thing to devour our dinner on the way to school, starving for the rest of the day. It is thus with thousands of infatuated ones a little later on; in the greediness of their heart they devour and waste their portion in the morning of life, and then starve through the long tedious day, or else go down to a premature grave. I say to my young brethren, wait, rein in your desires, move slowly, and every joy of life shall be yours in turn. "Haste is of the devil," is a saying in the East popularly ascribed to Mahomet himself. We may accept the saying in the matter before us; let youth be moderate, deliberate, avoiding all feverishness, drawing slowly on the resources of life. 2. There is the eagerness of manhood. We should do little in life without intensity, but there are times when we may with advantage take in sail, and give ourselves time for rest and reflection. It is certainly unseasonable to bring our business life in any shape into the Lord's Day. It is also unseasonable to allow worldly cares and ambitions to invade those spaces which are so necessary for our domestic and intellectual life. God grants us spaces for rest and thought in the home, in the chamber; and it is exhaustive, indeed, when our overweening worldliness excludes the possibilities of solitary and social life. Some men fill their annual holidays with anxieties until they are no holidays at all. And there are days of personal affliction, of domestic sorrows, of national calamity, when it is our solemn duty to pause in the race for riches and think of life's larger meaning. 3. There is the greed of age. Old men often come to the grave sooner than they need because they will not let the world go. They cling to ambition, although it wastes their strength and peace; they cling to business, they are pushing, grasping, hoarding as ever, although such application fast saps a life already tottering; they cling to pleasure, they will still wear the wreath of roses on their white hair, although to them it is the most fatal wreath of all. II. There is IMMODERATE DESIRE. We may pursue a right object with inordinate appetite. The Israelites were not content with the simple, pearly, wholesome food God gave them—they wanted something more piquant. They got what they wanted—and a grave. In all generations how many fall the same way. 1. There is the immoderateness of our literature. We must feast on the romantic, the sensational, the morbid, the exaggerated. Out of this excess of imaginative literature come great evils. The reading public live in a world of fancy, sentiment, passion; and this feverish unreality in the hours of retirement gives birth to much of that practical immoderation which is the curse of our age. I do not say abandon this literature of romance; but I do say restrain and chasten your imagination, for be sure this habit of wild dreaming is at the root of much of that general intemperance of life which hurries many to the grave. 2. There is the immoderation of our style of living. A writer was finding fault the other day with the present style of gardening. He complained that we have rooted up the old fragrant flowers—lavender, pinks, marigolds, mignonette, and gone in for crude patches of red and blue and yellow; that we have swept away sweet shrubs and bits of lawn for the sake of violet ribbon-borders and vulgar carpet-bedding. But does not our Italian gardening largely reflect our social life? Are we not often found renouncing sweet, simple methods of living for a showy, ostentatious style which brings with it little joy? 3. There is the immoderateness of our appetite. Thousands are digging their grave with their teeth, and scooping it out with their glass. 4. There is the immoderateness of business. Immoderation in other directions often drives men to unnatural eagerness in business. In haste to be rich they pierce themselves through with many sorrows. (1) How fatal all this immoderation is to health! We fret for money, drinking blood out of a golden basin; we are anxious to be great, and the path of glory leads to the grave; we are mad to seize the flowers of pleasure, and find the flowers of the churchyard. (2) How fatal is all this immoderation to happiness! There are thousands of successful merchants who after immense toil and sacrifice have secured wealth and position, and now they are distressed to find they have no power to eat what cost so much to get together. They have whatsoever their soul desireth, but they cannot taste any sweetness in it. Moderation is the secret of all life. Our health, our happiness, our character, our destiny, are bound up with self-restraint. Live with circumspection, live slowly, live by line and square, and you shall realise life at its best here, and then the life everlasting.

III. There is **ILLEGAL DESIRE**. Fixing our eye on forbidden things and lusting after them. How beautiful they seem, how desirable ! and yet they eat as doth a canker. They lead to a premature grave. "The wicked do not live out half their days." They lead to a dishonoured grave (Eccl. viii. 10). They lead to a hopeless grave. Such awake to shame and everlasting contempt. Do not hide it from yourselves for an hour that death is the price of touching forbidden things. Are you tempted by unlawful pleasure ? see the skeleton behind the flowers. By unlawful gain ? see the field of blood behind the pieces of silver. By unlawful greatness ? see the shroud wrapped up in the purple. By unlawful indulgence ? see that at the devil's banquet the sexton is head waiter. Lust when it hath conceived bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished will have finished you. This is the dismal eternal order ; and no secrecy, no strength, no skill on your part can disturb the programme or avert the penalty. Wherein, then, lies our safety ? In reducing all desire to a minimum ? Some of our sceptical writers counsel this, but it is not the philosophy of Christianity. The infinity of desire is a grand characteristic of our nature which it is no part of our duty to destroy. Christianity leaves intact our boundless desire, whilst it teaches us moderation in all worldly things. It does this by fixing our attention on our inner life. It assures us that the deep, final satisfaction is not in our senses, but in our spirit ; that we find the full and ultimate delight of life as our inner self grows in truth and goodness and love. It does this by fixing our hope on the heavenly life. The pilgrim is not likely to be too deeply engrossed about the tent curtains, tent pegs, tent cords. Think much of that greater life, and you shall not think overmuch about things which perish in the using. (*W. L. Watkinson.*) *The true nursing-father* :—It was but three days' march from Sinai, and the people encamped on a site which was ever memorable in their history, as recalling one of the gravest, saddest scenes in the experiences of the wilderness journey. We are only, however, now concerned in the incident so far as it affects the character of Moses. I. **THE TEST BENEATH WHICH MOSES BROKE DOWN.** But in the case of Moses there was surely an outbreak of impatience which was hardly justifiable. He loved the people, but his love was not strong enough to sustain the terrific test to which it was exposed. He pitied them, but beneath the scorching sun of their repeated provocations that pity dried up like waters which are absorbed in the desert heat. II. **THE PARALLEL IN CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.** 1. We also have need to beware of the influence of "the mixed multitude." Had it not been for these, Israel had walked with God, and been satisfied with His provision on their behalf. It was from them that the discontent proceeded. There are many professing Christians who have the form of godliness, but deny its power, and who pass freely in and out among the children of God. It is among these that we may expect to hear complaints that religion is dry and irksome, or rapturous descriptions of the food of Egypt, or special pleadings that there should be a mingling of the delights of the Egyptian world, which should have been left behind for ever, with the manna which God lays on the dew of the desert floor. Their influence is all the stronger in that they appeal to tendencies within us, which are so susceptible to their call. 2. We must distinguish between appetite and lust. The appetites have been implanted within us to maintain the machinery of life. If it were not for their action, we should neglect food and rest and exercise, and many other things necessary to our well-being. But in us all appetite is apt to run up into lust. In other words, we seek satisfaction, not for the necessary supply of our physical needs, but for the momentary pleasure which accompanies the gratification of appetite itself. Our motive is not the obtaining of some lawful and necessary end, but the titillation of taste and sense. Appetite has, therefore, to be curbed with a strong hand, lest it become inordinate passion, for the moment we take pleasure in the indulgence of appetite for its own sake, and apart from the legitimate end for which it was intended by the Almighty, we begin to tread a path that leads swiftly down to the bottomless pit. 3. Let us guard against the resurrection of easily besetting sins. We say to ourselves that certain forms of sin have died down within us, and will never trouble us more. We have grown out of them. But at that very moment the ghastly shape of that temptation is at hand, to assert perhaps even more than its olden force. You can never be sure of yourself. The suggestion that a certain form of temptation can have no further power over you is of the devil, and should excite you to greater watchfulness. Inordinate desire, murmuring and mistrust, are linked in the closest association. When one of these enters the window of the heart, it goes round to open the door to the other two. Oh, how often have we

grieved our heavenly Father! Have we not had days of provocation and temptation in the wilderness? III. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE SERVANT AND THE FATHER. Moses repudiated the office of the nursing-father. He could not sustain its responsibilities. But his failure only serves to bring out into distincter relief a touching conception of the Fatherhood of God. Forty years afterwards, as the aged law-giver, at the foot of Pisgah, was summing up the results of his experience, he said, "Thou hast seen how that the Lord thy God bare thee, as a man doth bare his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came unto this place" (Deut. i. 31; Isa. lxiii. 9; Acts xiii. 18, R.V. marg.). Moses' patience gave out in a twelvemonth, God's lasted till His work was done, and the people were safely deposited in the land of promise. If only the true story of our lives were written, it would be the most astounding record of God's forbearing and pitying love. Truly, "He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." But let us beware: there comes a time in the history of besetting sin when God ceases to strive against it. He gave them the quails they asked, flesh to the full. You may be mad for gold, and gold may pour in; mad for pleasure, and the golden barges wait to waft you on the swelling current; mad for applause, and it is yours till you are surfeited. God does not curse you, He leaves you to yourself, and that is curse enough. It is best to let our Father choose. His choice as to route and manna and length of daily journey must be the best. And when our yearnings are in opposition to His wise provision, let us quench them and yield our will about them. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*) *Uncontrolled desires*:—In what a solemn manner does this teach us the danger of uncontrolled desires! We have often thought what a beautiful prayer that is, "Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel" (Psa. xx. 4), when offered for one whose heart is subdued, and whose desires are concentrated on the fulfilment of God's promises. But would it not be an awful prayer for one whose heart is full of unhallowed desires, who longs, like Israel of old, only for earthly things? Oh, we should take heed what we desire, and for what we pray. You may ask for some earthly gift—it may be worldly prosperity, it may be wealth, or it may be for some other gift—some far higher, but still earthly gift—and because you are very intent upon it, God may give it you: and then the fulfilment of that desire may become a most terrible snare to you. The gift, whatsoever it be, may become your idol, may let down your affections to earth; and thus, whilst your prayers have been granted, God has sent leanness withal into your soul. Oh, it is exalted mercy, that God does not grant all our desires—that He so often sets aside some desires, and greatly disappoints others. We are prone to fret at this, but it is a part of a merciful plan, whereby He would bring us to rest in Himself. Oh, then, through grace, I will turn away from earth, with all its treasures, and from the creature, whatever its attractions be. I will turn to Jesus. In Him I cannot be disappointed. His love is altogether pure, altogether satisfying. (*G. Wagner.*) *The punishment of a gratified desire*:—Among the passengers on the St. Louis express was a woman very much overdressed, accompanied by a bright looking nurse-girl and a self-willed, tyrannical boy of about three years. The boy aroused the indignation of the passengers by his continued shrieks and kicks and screams, and his viciousness towards the patient nurse. He tore her bonnet, scratched her hands, and finally spat in her face, without a word of remonstrance from the mother. Whenever the nurse manifested any firmness, the mother chided her sharply. Presently, the mother composed herself for a nap; and about the time the boy had slapped the nurse for the fiftieth time, a wasp came sailing in, and flew on the window of the nurse's seat. The boy at once tried to catch it. The nurse caught his hand, and said coaxingly, "Harry mustn't touch. Wasp will bite Harry." Harry screamed savagely, and began to kick and pound the nurse. The mother, without opening her eyes or lifting her head, cried out sharply, "Why will you tease that child so, Mary? Let him have what he wants at once." "But, ma'am, its a——" "Let him have it, I say." Thus encouraged, Harry clutched at the wasp and caught it. The scream that followed brought tears of joy to the passengers' eyes. The mother woke again. "Mary," she cried, "let him have it!" Mary turned in her seat, and said confusedly, "He's got it, ma'am!" (*S. S. Times.*)

CHAPTER XII.

VERS. 1, 2. *Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses.*—*Miriam and Aaron's sedition*:—1. The noblest disinterestedness will not preserve us from the shafts of envy. The poet has said, in regard to another virtue, "Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny"; and no matter how unselfish we are, we may lay our account with some envenomed attacks which shall plausibly accuse us of seeking our own things and not the things that are Jesus Christ's. Nay, the more conspicuous we are for devotion to the public good, we may be only thereby more distinctly marked as a target for the world's scorn. "I am weary of hearing always of Aristides as the Just," was the expression of one who plotted for that patriot's banishment; and if a man's character be in itself a protest against abounding corruption, he will soon be assailed by some one in the very things in which he is most eminent. 2. This envy of disinterested greatness may show itself in the most unexpected quarters. If Aaron and Miriam were capable of such envy, we may not think that we are immaculate. It asks the minister to examine himself and see whether he has not been guilty of depreciating a brother's gifts, because he looked upon him as a rival rather than as a fellow-labourer; it bids the merchant search through the recesses of his heart, if haply the terms in which he refers to a neighbour, or the tales he tells of him, be not due to the fact that, either in business or in society, he has been somehow preferred before him; it beseeches the lady, who is engaged in whispering the most ill-natured gossip against another in her circle, to inquire and see whether the *animus* of her deed be not the avenging of some fancied slight, or the desire to protest against an honour which has been done to the object of what Thackeray has called "her due Christian animosity." Ah! are we not all in danger here? How well it would be if we repelled all temptations to envy as John silenced those who tried to set him against Jesus; for, as Bishop Hall has said, "That man hath true light who can be content to be a candle before the sun of others." 3. The utter meanness of the weapons which envy is content to employ. A man's house is his castle. No personal malice should enter into it with its attack; and no mean report should be received from the eavesdroppers who have first misunderstood and then misrepresented. If a man's public life has been blamable, then let him be arraigned; but let no Paul Pry interviewer cross his threshold to get hold of family secrets, or descend into the area to hear some hirelings' moralisings. Even the bees, when put into a glass hive, go to work at the very first to make the glass opaque, for they will not have their secrets made common property; and surely we busy human beings may sometimes be allowed to be by ourselves. 4. The assaults of envy are always best met by a silent appeal to Heaven. Let the victims of unjust assault take comfort, for God will be their defence. But let the envious ones take heed, for God hears their words, and He will one day confront them with His judgment. He may do that long before the day of final assize. He may meet them in His providence, and give them to understand that they who touch His faithful servants are touching the apple of His eye; nay, He may bring such trouble upon them that they will be glad to accept of the intercession of those whom they have maligned. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *The sin of Miriam and Aaron: evil speaking, Divine hearing, and saintly silence*:—I. THE SIN OF MIRIAM AND AARON. 1. Its root: jealousy and vaulting ambition. 2. Its occasion. 3. Its expression. II. THE DIVINE COGNISANCE OF THEIR SIN. "And the Lord heard." No one utterance of all the myriads of voices in His universe ever escapes His ear. There is a Divine hearer of every human speech. This is clear from—1. His omnipresence (*Psa. cxxxix. 7-12*). 2. His infinite intelligence. 3. His interest in His servants. III. THE COMMENDABLE CONDUCT OF MOSES UNDER THE PROVOCATION OF THEIR SIN. 1. He was sorely tried (*cf. Psa. lv. 12-15*). 2. He bore his sore trial most nobly. Conclusion: 1. In the conduct of Miriam and Aaron we have a beacon. Let us shun their sin, &c. 2. In the conduct of Moses we have a pattern. Let us imitate his meekness. (*W. Jones.*) *The modern application of an ancient incident*:—I. THE POSSESSION OF THE GREATEST GIFTS DOES NOT EXEMPT MEN FROM THE LIABILITY TO MEANNESS AND SIN. II. THE MOST EXCELLENT AND EMINENT SERVANTS OF GOD ARE NOT EXEMPT FROM THE REPROACHES OF MEN. III. OUR GREATEST TRIALS SOMETIMES ARISE FROM THE MOST UNLIKELY QUARTERS. IV. THE LORD TAKES COGNISANCE OF THE REPROACHES WHICH ARE CAST UPON HIS SERVANTS. V. THE SERVANTS OF THE LORD DO WELL IN BEARING PATIENTLY THE REPROACHES WHICH ARE CAST UPON THEM. (*Ibid.*) *Miriam's sin*:—I. MIRIAM'S SIN.

1. Jealousy. 2. Envy. 3. Evil-speaking. Privately sought to undermine the power of Moses among the people. 4. Folly. Could she have succeeded in destroying the power of Moses, she would have failed in getting them to recognise her as their leader. She did not see that she shone in the borrowed light of her great brother. 5. Rebellion against God. Moses was the servant of God: to resist him was to resist the Master. 6. Vain excuses. "Because," and because. . . . Sinners are often prolific in excuses; brought by them reasons. II. MIRIAM'S DETECTION. "And the Lord heard it." Moses may have heard of it. This seems to be implied by the allusion to his meekness (ver. 3). If the Lord hear, then no sin passes undetected. Moses gave himself no concern about it. Could Miriam meet her brother without shame? The Lord spake suddenly. God pronounced Moses "faithful." What must Miriam have thought of her faithfulness? III. MIRIAM'S PUNISHMENT. She was smitten with leprosy, and under circumstances that much heightened the effect of the punishment. 1. It was in the presence of the person she had injured. 2. In the presence of her fellow-conspirators. 3. By the great God, against whose authority she had rebelled. 4. Was excluded from the camp publicly. 5. Humbled, by being cleansed in answer to the prayer of him she had wronged. Learn—1. The great sin of evil-speaking. Especially against ministers of religion, whose influence for good ought to be preserved not only by themselves but by all about them. The character of public men is their strength. Destroy their character, their power is gone. By this loss the public itself is impoverished and injured. Hence such slander is suicidal. 2. God the defender of His servants. The severe punishment—and upon no other than Miriam—shows the Divine abhorrence of the sin. 3. Moses, leaving the exposure and punishment with God, and interceding for Miriam, teaches us how to regard attacks upon our character, and act under them, and towards such unhappy offenders. (*J. C. Gray.*) *Envy and pride meekly met*:—I. WHAT SINFUL PRINCIPLES WILL PROMPT A MAN TO DO. Here we see the ties of nature disregarded; the bonds of professed fellowship burst asunder; God's interest disregarded. Pride and envy had entered the heart, and all consequences were unheeded, even though Moses should be brought into contempt before the whole congregation. Let us fear lest such principles should ever get possession of our minds; the first feeling must be mourned over and prayed against. II. WHAT DIVINE GRACE WILL ENABLE US TO BEAR. If we imbibe the spirit of our Lord and Master we shall offer prayer for those who use us ill. If the approbation of God be ours, though all the world be against us it will do us no harm. It was said of one of the martyrs that he was so like Christ that he could not be roused by injuries to say one word that was revengeful. Oh, if this spirit were universal, what a happy world would this be! See how the grace of God can enable us to return good for evil, and thus feel an indescribable peace and happiness in our own spirit, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost. The power of man can never impart this meek and quiet spirit; it can alone come from the blessed influence of the Holy Spirit. (*George Breay, B.A.*) *The great evil of ambition*:—The true cause of this their murmuring was pride and ambition, self-love, ostentation, and vainglory. Hereby we learn that there cometh no greater plague to the Church of God than by ambition and desire of pre-eminence. The ambition and pride of Amaziah, the priest of Beth-el, would not suffer the prophet Amos in the land of Israel, but he commanded him to fly away into the land of Judah and prophesy there (Amos vii. 10, 12). We see this apparently afterward (Numb. xvi.) in Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Neither is this evil dead with these; for this is a great plague of the Church to this day, and very pernicious. Nothing hath more ruined the Church of God, overthrown piety, corrupted religion, hindered the gospel, discouraged the pastors and professors of it, nothing hath more erected the kingdom of anti-Christ than these petty popes, the true successors of Diotrephes, such as desire to be universal bishops and to reign alone. The mischief hereof appeareth by sundry reasons. 1. It causeth a great rent and division in the Church, and disturbeth the peace of it (chap. xvi. 1). 2. It setteth up men and putteth down the Lord and His ordinances, urging, compelling, and commanding against the truth (Acts iv. 18, 19). 3. It proceedeth from very evil roots, and bringeth forth very evil effects, as an evil tree bringeth forth evil fruits. The causes from whence it floweth are Satan, pride, disdain of others, self-love, no love of the truth, no zeal of God's glory, no desire of the good of the Church. The effects thereof are trouble, disquietness, fear, flattery, envy, and subtilty. Let us come to the uses. 1. It reproveth those who bear themselves as lords over the flock of Christ. 2. Acknowledge this ambition to be a general corruption, the remainders whereof are in all

the servants of God, yea, in all the children of Adam; we have drawn it from him, and thereby it hath leavened and corrupted all mankind. If any man ask what it is, I answer, It is an immoderate desire after dignity, and of dignity upon dignity; it is a thirst that never can be quenched; for as the covetous person hath never enough money, so the ambitious hath never enough honour. It is a secret poison, a hidden plague, the mother of hypocrisy, the father of envy, the fountain of vices, the moth of piety, a blind guide and leader of the hearts of men. The farther we think ourselves from it the nearer commonly it cometh unto us; and therefore let nothing be done through strife and vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves (Phil. ii. 3). 3. Lastly, let all learn to beware of this evil. (*W. Attersoll.*) *Claiming equality*:—If the Lord did speak by Miriam and Aaron, what then? The Lord Himself acknowledges that He speaks in different ways to different men. To some—perhaps to most—He comes in vision and in dream; things are heard as if they were spoken beyond the great mountain; they are echoes, wanting in shape and directness, yet capable of interpretations that touch the very centres and springs of life, that make men wonder, that draw men up from flippancy, and write upon vacant faces tokens of reverence and proofs that the inner vision is at the moment entranced by some immeasurable revelation. To other men God speaks “apparently”—that is, in broad and visible figure. He is quite near; it is as if friend were accosting friend, as if two interlocutors were mutually visible and speaking within hand-range of one another. There is nothing superstitious about this; it is the fact of to-day. Take a book of science—what do you find in that rational and philosophical bible? You find certain names put uppermost. Why should not every boy that has caught his first fly, or cut in two his first worm, say, “Hath not the Lord spoken unto me as well as unto Darwin, or Cuvier, or Buffon?—who are they?” But it does so happen that outside the Bible we have the Moses of science—the chief man of letters, the prince of song. Take the history of music, and we find names set by themselves like insulated stars—great planetary names. What would be thought of a person who has just learned the notes of music, saying, “Hath not the Lord spoken unto me as well as unto Beethoven?” He has; but He has not told you so much. There is a difference in kind; there is a difference in quality. We find this same law operating in all directions. There are books that say, “Are not we inspired as well as the Bible?” The answer is, “Certainly you are.” The Lord had spoken to Miriam and to Aaron as certainly as He had spoken to Moses, but with a difference; and it is never for Moses to argue with Miriam. Moses takes no part in this petty controversy. He would have disproved his superior inspiration if he had stooped to this fray of words. So some books seem to say, “Are not we also inspired?” The frank and true answer is, “Yes.” Is not many a sentence in the greatest of dramatists an inspired sentence? The frank, Christian, just answer is, “Yes.” Is not many a discovery in the natural world quite an instance of inspiration? Why hesitate to say, “Yes; but always with a difference”? The Bible takes no part in the controversy about its own inspiration. The Bible lives—comes into the house when it is wanted, goes upstairs to the sick-chamber, follows the lonely sufferer into solitude, and communes with him about the mystery of disappointment, discipline, pain of heart; goes to the grave-side, and speaks about the old soldier just laid to rest, the little child just exhaled like a dewdrop by the morning sun. It lives because no hand can slay it; it stands back, or comes forward, according to the necessity of the case, because of a dignity that can wait, because of an energy that is ready to advance. Some books claim to be as inspired as the Bible. Then they become leprous, and all history has shown that they are put out of the camp. Many books have arisen to put down the Bible; they have had their day: they have ceased to be. We must judge by facts and realities. When a man who has no claim to the dignity asserts that he is upon an equality with the great musician, the great musician takes no part in the fray; when the competitor has played his little trick, one touch of the fingers regulated by the hand Divine will settle the controversy. By this token we stand or fall with our Christianity, with our great gospel. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Hatred between brothers and sisters*:—What were Aaron and Miriam to Moses? Even his own brother and sister. And cannot such agree? Will there be jars and grudgings in such? Would God it were not too true. Nay, such is our corruption, if the Lord lead us not with His loving Spirit, that not only we disagree being brothers and sisters, but with a far more bitter and implacable wrath than others that are farther off. What a venom was in Cain to his brother Abel when nothing but blood would appease it? What was in Esau’s heart

towards his brother Jacob? Oh, what venom is this that lurketh in our nature if God leaves us to ourselves! May we not justly marvel at some men, otherwise of great wisdom and judgment, that dare break out unto the praise of these perturbations as virtues and badges of noble minds? For what is this but as if a man would praise the diseases of the body and the nettles and weeds and hurtful plants of the earth. Should not he be accounted mad that would set his own house on fire? And I pray you what he that will cast fire into his own heart to set it on a flame? Saint Augustine was wont to say, "Look how vinegar put into a vessel thereby is made sour and corrupted"; so is the malicious person by his own anger made filthy and most distasteful to all good men. And if thus among strangers, oh, what among brothers and sisters! Wherefore what council is given to refrain all anger, venom, and hatred, let it in particular be applied to bridle all rage or dislike among such near ones as now we speak of. (*Ep. Babington.*)

Ver. 3. **The man Moses was very meek.**—*The grace of meekness*:—How beautiful a grace is meekness! It may be somewhat difficult to define; but whenever we see we cannot fail to know and to feel its gentle and winning power. It is a grace that implies so very much in the heart. It is the beautiful result of many other graces; whilst its place in the beatitudes shows that it is the root on which others grow. Meekness is quite consistent with power and authority; for Moses had great power and authority in Israel, and yet, altogether unspoilt by it, he was the meekest of men. But we may look to another example, far greater than Moses, who said, "All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth"; and yet added, "I am meek and lowly in heart." It is in such lofty places that meekness is the most beautiful, because it then can, and does, stoop very low. But though this grace is evidently consistent with any power and authority, however exalted, it is altogether inconsistent with the love of power and with the love of authority. Meekness can only grow upon the ruins of selfishness in all its forms, whether it be selfishness towards God—that is, unbelief—or whether it be selfishness towards man, either in its form of pride, love of our own way, love of ease, love of money. But we may trace another feature in meekness from the example of Moses, and learn that this grace is not the attribute of a weak character, but the ornament of a firm and comprehensive spirit. Indeed, we seldom find real meekness in vacillating characters; for such yield when they ought not to yield, and then, rebuked by conscience for yielding, they become angry. Meekness will more often be found in the resolute character when it is sanctified by the Spirit of God, and obstinacy is purged out. Moses was a beautiful example of extraordinary strength of character. His one will was stronger than the united wills of all Israel. And yet amongst them all there was not one to be found so meek as he; and the reason was, because his will rested on the will of God. It was an unselfish will, and therefore it was that its uncommon power did not exclude meekness. We all need this grace in every relationship of life. As parents, for meekness should be the border and fringe of every act of authority; as mistresses, for in the carelessness and want of conscientiousness of servants your spirit may be tried nearly every day; as Christians, for St. Peter exhorts us (1 Pet. iii. 15) to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear"; as teachers, for St. Paul says (2 Tim. ii. 24, 25). In these days of collision between system and system, and of sad confusion of views of Divine truth, we specially seem to need the spirit of meekness. For it is not rude attacks upon error, but truth spoken in meekness and love that avails and has most power. Meekness should be the handmaid of zeal. All of us must feel, if we have only made the experiment, how difficult of attainment is this grace; and yet there is great encouragement to seek it. It appears in the cluster of graces described as the "fruit of the Spirit." It is the last but one, perhaps to show us the height at which it grows. There is a beautiful promise of guidance to the meek "The meek will He guide in judgment; and the meek will He teach His way" (Psa. xxv. 9); and in Psa. cxlix. 4 is a larger promise still—"He will beautify the meek with salvation." And then we cannot forget the beatitude uttered by the lips of Him whose meekness never failed—"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth!" (*G. Wagner.*) *Moses the meek*:—Who records this? The popular answer is, Moses. He is the reputed author of the Pentateuch. Moses tells us, therefore, that Moses was the meekest of men. But if so, what becomes of his humility? Some meet the difficulty by reminding us that the verse is a parenthesis. It is enclosed in brackets. Perhaps it was added afterwards by another hand.

This, of course, is possible. At the same time it is a desperate mode of dealing with the case. Supposing that Moses did indite it, what then? It is not necessarily a display of vanity. There are two kinds of egotism—the false and the true. If a man refers to himself simply as a historian, and merely because the circumstances of the case call for it, that is quite a lawful, righteous egotism. If, on the contrary, he does it out of conceit, he thereby manifests “vain glory,” and merits our scorn. A consciousness of integrity will sometimes impel its possessor to assert it, especially when it is misunderstood and persecuted. The uprightness of Job led him to exclaim, “When I am tried I shall come forth as gold.” “The man Moses was very meek.” But was he always such? Are we to regard his meekness as constitutional? There appear to be solid reasons for thinking that Israel’s distinguished lawgiver was originally impulsive and even passionate! At first, he was anything but slow to anger. And, as we read the narrative of his life, we mark the old disposition ever and anon asserting itself. Just as you sometimes see, in the midst of green pastures and yellow corn, patches of rock, fern, and heather, reminding you of the pristine state of the ground, so now and then the hasty spirit of Moses got the better of him. These were lingering and occasional outbreaks on the part of what the apostle would call “the old man.” They were exceptional. So faithfully had he watched against his besetting sin, so prayerfully had he exercised vigorous self-control, that the naturally irritable man became “very meek above all the men who were on the face of the earth.” As a certain author admirably writes: “A traveller, giving an account of an ancient volcano, tells of a verdurous cup-like hollow on the mountain summit, and, where the fierce heat once had burned, a clear, still pool of water, looking up like an eye to heaven above. It is an apt parable of Moses. Naturally and originally volcanic, capable of profound passion and daring, he is new-made by grace till he stands out in calm grandeur of character with all the gentleness of Christ adorning him. The case of Moses is representative. It does not stand alone in grand isolation. That our weakest point may become our strongest is one of the most obvious and inspiring teachings of the Bible. Peter Thomas, a physiognomist, closely scanning the face of Socrates, pronounced him to be a bad man. He even went so far as to specify his vices and faults. “Proud, crabbed, lustful,” were the charges brought against him. The Athenians laughed this to scorn. Every body knew its falsity. The distinguished sage was the exact opposite of the description. To their amazement, however, Socrates hushed them, and declared that no calumny had been uttered. “What he has said,” he remarked, “accurately describes my nature, but by philosophy I have controlled and conquered it.” Let us be of good cheer. Philosophy is good, but we have something better—“the grace of God which bringeth salvation.” Let us but make it our own, and we shall joyfully experience its victories. (*T. R. Stevenson.*) *Meekness*.—What is meekness? It is not the repudiation of self-defence. Everything that is made has a right to exist, or God would not have made it; and, if any other creature trespasses on this its birth-charter, it is justified in defending itself. Neither is meekness a mental incapacity to discern insults and injuries. A man who cannot do that is not meek but stupid. Nor is meekness a natural mildness which is incapable of being provoked. There are people of such a temper—or, rather, non-temper. It is no credit to them. We may call such people soft; but it would be a misnomer to call them meek. In fact, unless they can be stirred up, they are incapable of meekness; for the more natural fierceness a man has the more capable he is of meekness, and he upon whom anybody that comes along may make his scratch is anything but a meek person. Neither are they meek who are restrained from exhibiting resentment by fear or self-interest. They are cowards. All these are negative qualities. And it is impossible that meekness should belong to this tribe; for it must be immensely positive and tremendously energetic since it is to subjugate the earth and inherit it. The first element in meekness is docility—a willingness to learn, a readiness to go through the drudgery and labour connected with learning, a disposition to suppress the impatience which prevents us from learning. The second element is self-restraint, both toward God and toward man. The tendency of trouble is to irritate, to render the soul peevish, angry, morose, rebellious. But the meek soul has learned in the school of Christ. It accepts the truth that “all things work together for good to them that love God”; and, therefore, disciplines itself to patience under trial. Meekness educates man up to a Godlike standard. It stores up strength in the soul—a strength that shall prove available in the emergencies of life. The meek men are the men of might. They have broad shoulders and strong backs, or they could not carry this

load of other men's ignorance, infirmity, and sin; and it is meekness that squares their shoulders, toughens their tendons, and develops their muscles. The meek men are, if the exigency arises, the most terrible of the earth. There are bounds to the exercise of meekness. Paul indicates this when he says: "What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love?" When the meek man does take the rod, he lays it on until the work is thoroughly done. (*H. M. Scudder, D.D.*)

Vers. 5-10. *The Lord came down.*—*God's vindication of Moses*:—There are several circumstances of the Lord's proceedings laid down in the text. 1. As, first, His speed. By and by the Lord called them; so showing us how fitting a thing, yea, how pleasing to Him, convenient expedition is in justice, and how displeasing, needless, and sinister delays. It sheweth also what a tender feeling God hath of the wrongs of His children, not only of some, but by name of magistrates' and governors' wrongs, when they are spoken against without cause. Surely He so feelth it, that even by and by He will undertake the righting of them, and cannot hold from punishing such offenders as so lightly regard His holy ordinance. We think that unless we keep ado in our own causes it is not well (and I condemn not all care this way), but certainly none have been sooner and better righted than such as patiently have endured a time and committed things to the justice of God. 2. He calleth the two offenders by themselves, leaving Moses to hear and see for his comfort the Lord's care for him. And this also is a great point of justice, to call persons that have done amiss, not carrying matters in secret and condemning without hearing. 3. He speaketh to them and biddeth them hear His words as He had heard theirs. Which likewise sheweth that true justice chargeth men, and doth not hoard up in heart what cutteth off love and liking; giving good words outwardly, and yet inwardly thinking most evil things. Oh, let us hear your words if you have conceived any offence, and then will either confession or true purgation give satisfaction? The contrary course may have policy in it, but who shall justify it for piety, charity, or any virtue? 4. In His words He setteth down the difference of prophets, showing that all have not alike measure vouchsafed of Him, and therefore may not argue, I am a prophet as well as he; *ergo*, as good as he. Such kind of reasonings have in all times disquieted the Church and peace of the godly. The differences which God layeth down you see in the text. To some by vision; to some by dream; to some in darker words, to some in plainer; but to Moses mouth to mouth; that is in a more excellent measure of grace, and familiar favour than ever to any. Therefore, although the Lord had also spoken by them; yet forasmuch as it was not in that degree as to Moses, they should not have compared themselves with him, but yielded him a reverence above themselves. Yea, how were ye not afraid, saith the Lord, to speak against My servant Moses, even against Moses? So showing that imparity of grace and gifts from the Lord should work ever an imparity of honour and regard by all that will walk rightly, though in some other respect there may be a parity. (*Bp. Babington.*)

Vers. 10-16. *Miriam became leprous.*—*The punishment of Miriam and Aaron*:—**I. THE DIVINE JUDGMENT BECAUSE OF THE SIN OF MIRIAM AND AARON.** 1. The punishment was inflicted by the Lord. 2. The punishment was appropriate to the sin. 3. The punishment fell most severely upon Miriam. (1) She was the instigator of the sin. (2) Aaron's office of high priest also probably helped to shield him. Had he been smitten with leprosy he would have been disgraced in the eyes of the people, and his holy office would probably have been brought into disesteem amongst them. (3) Yet Aaron was not altogether exempted from punishment. As priest he had to examine Miriam and pronounce her leprous. Again he had to examine her and pronounce her clean before she was readmitted to the camp. That he deeply realised his painful position is evident from the narrative (vers. 10-12). Let us remember that there is judgment with God. **II. THE DIVINE JUDGMENT LEADING TO PERSONAL HUMILIATION.** 1. Humble acknowledgment to Moses. 2. Confession of sin. 3. Entreaty for the removal of the judgment from Miriam. **III. THE REMARKABLE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE EMINENCE OF MOSES THE SERVANT OF THE LORD.** 1. In the manner in which he was addressed by Aaron. 2. In the appeal which was made to him by Aaron. This appeal implies on the part of Aaron—(1) Faith in the magnanimity of Moses—that he would not retaliate upon them for their attack upon him; that he was forgiving and generous. (2) Faith in the influence which Moses had with God. **IV. THE DISTINGUISHED MAGNANIMITY AND GRACE OF MOSES.** "And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, Heal her now, O God,

I beseech Thee." There was no resentment in his heart, but fullest forgiveness and sincerest pity. His prayer for Miriam is an anticipation of the precept of our Lord, "Pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matt. v. 44).

V. THE GREAT POWER OF THE INTERCESSION OF GOOD MEN. VI. THE JUSTICE AND MERCY OF GOD AS MANIFESTED IN HIS TREATMENT OF MIRIAM. VII. THE SIN OF ONE PERSON CHECKING THE PROGRESS OF AN ENTIRE NATION. (W. Jones.) *Miriam smitten with leprosy : transfiguration through transgression*.—I. THIS TRANSFIGURATION WAS BROUGHT TO PASS ON ACCOUNT OF THE JEALOUSY OF MIRIAM OF MOSES, AND THE JEALOUSY OF GOD FOR MOSES. II. THE TRANSFORMATION WAS IN KEEPING WITH THE EXPRESSED JEALOUSY OF GOD AND OF MIRIAM. (*Ibid.*) *The punishment of wrong-doers*.—I. THAT BOTH GOD AND MAN EXPRESS THEIR DISPLEASURE TOWARDS WRONG-DOERS ON THIS EARTH. 1. God, in many ways. (1) Providential afflictions. (2) Moral retributions. 2. Man, also, in many ways. (1) Sometimes in his personal capacity, by denunciatory language and physical chastisement. (2) Sometimes in his corporate capacity, as a member of the State, by pains and penalties. II. THAT THE WRONG-DOERS ARE GENERALLY FAR MORE AFFECTED BY THE EXPRESSION OF MAN'S DISPLEASURE THAN WITH THAT OF GOD'S. 1. Most irrational. 2. Most impious. 3. Most perilous. (*Homilist.*) *The leprosy of Miriam*.—1. We should humbly submit to the will of Heaven. 2. We should remember that in the distribution of gifts, what is best for one may be destruction for another. 3. To covet the gift of a neighbour is a wrong to him and an offence to God. 4. Each man's duty is to develop the gift that is in him. (*Homiletic Monthly.*) *Miriam and Moses*.—Was this weakness, as some would say? Nay, verily, it was the exhibition of colossal spiritual strength. It is the weak man who gives blow for blow, who blurts out his wrath, who cannot control the passion of his spirit. It may be well to give some closing rules as to the attainment of this meek and quiet spirit, which in sight of God is of great price. 1. Let us claim the meekness of Christ. This, of course, was not possible for Moses in the direct way in which it is for us. And yet there was no doubt in his case also a constant appeal for heavenly grace. And in moments of provocation there is nothing better than to turn to Him and claim His calm, His sweet silence, His patience and meekness, saying, "I claim all these, my Lord, for the bitter need of my spirit." 2. It is acquired, next, by cultivating the habit of silence. Express a thought, and you give it strength; repress it, and it will wither and die. You will often hear it said that the best way of getting rid of an importunate passion is to let it out and have done with it. It is, however, a very mistaken policy. Silence will kill it as ice kills fish when there are no vent-holes by which they can come up to breathe. Learn to be still, to keep the door of the lips closed. 3. Next, by considering the harm done by the aggressors to themselves. The cloud removed from over the tent, as if it must leave the very spot where the culprits stood; and behold, Miriam was leprous, white as snow. There is a profound piece of instruction here; you cannot say unkind or bitter things about another without hurting yourself more than you hurt him. Like the boomerang of the savage, curses come back to the spot from which they start. 4. In allowing God to vindicate our cause. Moses let God vindicate him, and the Almighty God rode upon a cherub and did fly, and flew on the wings of the wind. This is the secret of rest, to cultivate the habit of handing all over to God, as Hezekiah did, when he spread out Sennacherib's letter in the house of the Lord. Commit yourself to Him that judgeth righteously. 5. Also in intercessory prayer. Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, "Heal her, O God, I beseech Thee." When we pray for those who have despitefully used and persecuted us, it is marvellous how soon the soul gets calm and tender. And the Lord heard His servant's prayer, and healed Miriam; but the whole host was delayed a week through her sin. We may be forgiven, but these outbreaks of sin always entail disaster and delay. Neither we nor others can be where we might have been had they not occurred. (F. B. Meyer, B.A.) *Miriam's punishment humiliating*.—The punishment was as humiliating as it was public. Her tongue, so free upon her brother's conduct, is mute enough now, except to cry if any approached her, "Unclean! unclean!" She who aspired to be Queen of Israel is cast forth as an unclean thing from the camp. When the dreadful punishment was finished, she came back to the camp humbled, and no doubt strengthened in her soul by the correction she had received. (S. Robinson, D.D.) *Shame for the envious*.—The lesson here has a very close application to all who engage as the Lord's instruments and agents in the work of building up Christ's kingdom. When those so engaged forget the nature of their calling, and fall into contentions and

lickerings about their relative position as agents for Jehovah, the result must in the end be shame and humiliation for the envious and jealous, and damage to the cause of Christ, about which He will surely make inquisition. How much of the strifes and bickering between Christians of the same Church, and between different sects comes not from earnestly contending for the faith, but from the narrow jealousies and envyings wholly personal with those who indulge them! How often is it simply the Miriams and Aarons giving way to their petty jealousy under cover of scruples of conscience! (*Ibid.*) *Such as have the chief hand in sin, are principally subject to punishment*:—Aaron was accessory to this mutiny against Moses, but Miriam was chief in the sin, and therefore is also chief in the punishment. Simeon and Levi were not the only murderers of the Schemites and invaders of the city, but they were the chief ringleaders, and therefore are only named (Gen. xxxiv. 25), and punished (Gen. xlix. 5). Whosoever practiseth any evil, whether he be principal or accessory, is guilty in the sight of God, and therefore such as are ministers of other men's evils are oftentimes punished, whether they be reasonable or unreasonable creatures (Gen. iii. 14; Lev. xx. 15; Exod. xxi. 28, 29, 32; Josh. vi. 17; Isa. xxx. 22). As God is just, so He punisheth the instruments of injustice. Notwithstanding, though the instruments do offend and not escape, the chief punishment is ever reserved for the chief offender. 1. For such as are chief in government ought to stay their inferiors from evil, as the head governeth the members. Eli is charged with the wickedness of his sons (1 Sam. iii. 13). Such governors make themselves the tail and not the head, whereas they should order those of their house as the soul ruleth the body. 2. God will require the blood of those that perish at the hands of the governors; the magistrate is the watchman of the commonwealth; the minister is the watchman of the Church; the householder is the watchman of the family; all set as it were in their watch-tower, and all must give an account for such as are under them. 3. The sin of those that have the chiefest hand in it is greater than of others, so it deserveth the greater punishment; forasmuch as the sin and punishment shall be suitable one to the other. Uses: 1. It belongeth to all, especially to such as are superiors, to consider this; they think themselves absolute, and that they ought of right to command what they list to their inferiors. But as they are superior in place, so they shall also be superior in punishment, if they command anything against God and His Word. 2. It is the duty of all householders to be careful to order their families aright, and to compel them to serve the Lord. 3. Lastly, there cometh a great blessing upon their heads that are the chief in any good work, that encourage others in the ways of godliness, for they shall have a principal reward. Happy and blessed therefore are they that govern their charges as becometh them (Gen. xviii. 18). This is a notable commendation of Abraham, he was chief, and one that went before the rest in good things, and therefore he should chiefly be rewarded. This should stir us up, not only to do good, but to be chief in doing good, to go before others, to lead them the way, that so we may have the greater and better reward in that great day. (*W. Attersoll.*) *Miriam's degradation*:—A striking spectacle was once witnessed in the Four Courts of St. Louis. A young man was under arrest for some crime. Before being committed to prison, he was taken to the photographer's rooms, and his picture taken to be sent to the various cities keeping "rogues' galleries," to be hung up on the walls with the faces of other criminals kept there. The description of the feeling manifested by the young man on this occasion is both touching and suggestive. "Big tears formed in his eyes and fell down on his cheeks. He dropped his head on his breast and cried. He was so overcome with emotion that he could not speak until he was again placed in his cell in the gaol. After swallowing great lumps in his throat, he said he now felt he had dropped from the rôle of a gentleman to that of the lowest criminal; and the thought of his picture being placed in the rogues' gallery was more than he could bear." How dreadful to be classed with the workers of iniquity, and to become the spectacle before man and angels of one who rejected light and truth, and basely sinned against a great and gracious God. (*S. S. Chronicle.*) *Heal her now, O God, I beseech Thee.*—*The prayer of Moses for Miriam*.—I. THE PRAYER. 1. Explicit. Nothing vague. 2. Earnest. 3. Generous. 4. Well-timed. II. THE ANSWER. 1. Most gracious. 2. Most wise. 3. Most speedy. (*R. A. Griffin.*) *Moses' generosity*:—Miriam would have wounded Moses with her tongue; Moses would heal her with his: "O Lord, heal her now." The wrong is the greater, because his sister did it. He doth not say, I sought not her shame, she sought mine; if God have revenged it, I have no reason to look on her as a sister, who looked on me as an adversary; but, as if her

leprosy were his, he cries out for her cure. Oh, admirable meekness of Moses ! His people, the Jews, rebelled against him ; God proffers revenge ; he would rather die than they should perish. His sister rebelled against him ; God works his revenge ; he will not give God peace till she be re-cured. Behold a worthy and noble pattern for us to follow ! (*Bp. Hall.*)

CHAPTER XIII.

VERS. 1-20. Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan.—*Glances of the better land* :—I. THE SEARCH. II. THE RETREAT. III. AN EMBLEM OF GOD'S DEALINGS WITH HIS PEOPLE. 1. The children of Israel were sent back to the wilderness on account of their sin. 2. While they are sent in judgment, they go back of their own accord. 3. Though the fruit of sin, and the token of God's righteous displeasure, all was overruled for their good. 4. Though chastened they are not cast off. (1) They are Divinely delivered. (2) They are Divinely sustained. (3) They are Divinely guided. (4) They are Divinely chastened. IV. IMPROVEMENT. 1. Let young believers be not high-minded, but fear. 2. Let backsliders remember and weep. 3. Let tried and troubled saints take fresh courage. (*Islay Burns, D.D.*)

The sending forth of the spies :—I. THE ORIGIN OF THIS EXPEDITION (*cf.* Deut. i. 20-25). 1. God had Himself declared to them the excellence of the land (Exod. iii. 8 ; xxxiii. 3). 2. He had promised to guide them to the land (Exod. xxxii. 34 ; xxxiii. 2, 14). Moreover, He was visibly present with them in the majestic pillar of cloud and fire. 3. He had promised to drive out the heathen nations and give them possession of the land (Exod. xxiii. 20-33 ; Deut. i. 8). 4. He commanded them to "go up and possess" the land (Deut. i. 8, 21). 5. Yet their answer was, "We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land," &c. (Deut. i. 22). Clearly their duty was not to send men to search out the land, but trusting in God, to obey His voice and go and take possession of the land. God may allow us to carry out our unbelieving plans to our own confusion. If we will "lean unto our own understanding," He will let us take our way until we find what utter folly our fancied wisdom is. II. THE AGENTS IN THIS EXPEDITION. "Of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them," &c. (vers. 2-16). Three points here require notice. 1. The wisdom of this arrangement. (1) In sending one man from each tribe. By this arrangement every tribe would have a witness of its own. (2) In sending a leading man from each tribe. They were approved men of influence, and therefore their testimony would be the more likely to be credited. 2. The scarcity of worthy leaders. We see here that a large proportion of even these leading men, these "rulers" and "heads of the children of Israel," were unworthy of the position which they occupied. 3. The diversity of human fame. The names of these twelve men have been handed down to the present time ; but how different are the positions which they occupy ! History perpetuates the memory of Nero as well as of St. Paul, of Judas Iscariot as well as of Jesus Christ. We are making our posthumous reputation now ; let us take heed that it be of a worthy character. III. THE AIMS OF THIS EXPEDITION. They were to report as to the condition of—1. The land, whether it was fertile or barren, whether it was wooded or bare, &c. 2. The towns, whether they were walled and fortified or open and unprotected, &c. 3. The people, whether they were strong or weak, whether they were few or many, &c. IV. THE SPIRIT APPROPRIATE TO THIS EXPEDITION. "And be ye of good courage." (*W. Jones.*)

The twelve spies :—I. THEIR SELECTION. 1. One from each tribe. That each tribe, without preference or distinction, might be represented. 2. Each was a man of mark. "Every one a ruler." "Heads of the children of Israel." Men of judgment and discretion. This the more needful—(1) Because the journey was perilous. (2) Because the object was important. Men able to judge of the soil, and inhabitants. 3. They were chosen and sent by Moses. Their various characters prove the impartiality of Moses. He could doubtless have found in each tribe a man after his own heart. Probably he allowed the people of each tribe to have a voice in the matter. II. THEIR COMMISSION. 1. They were to spy out the whole land. Not to give a report upon some few favourable or unfavourable aspects of it. 2. They were to observe the people, and note especially their numbers, character, habits,

and strength. 3. They were to bring particulars of the dwellings of the people; whether cities, tents, or otherwise. From this, their habits and power of resistance might be inferred. 4. They were carefully to examine the soil, whether fit for pasturage or tillage, whether it was fat or lean. 5. To confirm and illustrate what they might say of the soil, they were to bring of the fruit of the land. 6. They were to be fearless. God would have them in His keeping. III. **THEIR JOURNEY.** 1. In the glorious summer-time, thus commissioned, they set out on their enterprise. Time when the country looked most beautiful. 2. They passed up through the whole country, from the south to the extreme north; even to Hamath. 3. Returning, they visited Hebron. Should not the remembrance of him who dwelt there (Abraham) have encouraged them to believe in their conquest of the country? 4. At a place afterwards called Eshcol (the place of grapes, or the cluster), they cut down a large bunch of grapes; and collecting also some figs and pomegranates, they returned with much information after forty days. IV. **THEIR REPORT.** 1. Things in which they agreed. Concerning the country, soil, fruit, people. They showed the fruit they had brought. 2. Things about which they differed. Their ability to conquer this wonderful country. 3. Effect of their representations. (1) Immediate. People discouraged and tumultuous (ver. 30; xiv. 1-5). They began to rebel. Were for returning to Egypt. (2) Ultimate. Delayed the stay in the desert, and the conquest of Canaan for many years. 4. Only Joshua and Caleb faithful; these were silenced and out-voted. Minorities have often been in the right. Reason: goodness and wisdom generally with the few. (*J. C. Gray.*) *Wise travellers:*—To us at this day the use may be twofold. First, to such as travel to see foreign countries, that they observe fit things in them, so make good use of their travel, not neglecting things profitable, and sucking up all venom, that the corruption of those places may yield, as too many do, to their own, not only temporal, but eternal woe, and to the poisoning of many others when they return. Secondly, to magistrates, ministers, and all of good disposition, it may be a pattern of care and endeavour, according to the places and power they have, to work liking in men of the true Canaan that shall endure for ever, and a daily disliking of the pleasures of Egypt, this transitory and sinful world, that bewitcheth so many to their endless woe and confusion. (*Bp. Babington.*) *The promised land:*—We have a heavenly Canaan, towards which we are journeying; and we are told by an oracle, even more sure than the Urim and Thummim, "There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God." This, then, being the case, can we do better than apply to ourselves the injunction in the text, and "search out the land" which is our promised abode? True it is, we cannot send men as the Jews did, for "who shall ascend into heaven, save the Son of God which came down from heaven?" The city which we seek is no fancy of the imagination. But shall we open the book of their record, and note what inspired lips have spoken concerning the New Jerusalem? Shall we tell you of the gates, each made of a single pearl, and the foundations of twelve manner of precious stones? When the gates of that city shall close upon the ransomed spirit, will it be on these things that the undying eye will be fixed, or rather upon the face of "Him who sitteth upon the throne," the triune Jehovah, the glorified Jesus? He who hath "washed us in His own blood, and made us kings and priests to God and to the Lamb," will be the supreme object of our admiration and worship. Such is the land towards which we are hastening—an inheritance not doubtful, but secured to us by two "immutable things, by which it is impossible for God to lie." And now, having heard this good report, shall we gird on our swords and prepare, as disciples of the Lord, to "fight the good fight of faith," and declare in the heart-stirring words of Caleb, "Let us go up and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it." Press forward, then; the voice of our Captain is cheering us onward—"Fear not, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Angels are rejoicing at our progress; and not only so, but fighting on our side; Satan and his apostate legions are fleeing before the triumphant cross. Shall we plead our terrors at the Anakim, while the sword of the Eternal is drawn on our behalf? Away with the thought; "though they hedge us in on every side, in the name of the Lord we will destroy them." Yet let us not go on this warfare "without counting the cost"; the enemies against whom we have to contend are giants indeed. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." These our foes are watchful as well as powerful; they are most malignant; they know our weak parts, and

can tempt us most craftily; they are in league with the corruption of our own nature, and are often most dangerous when least suspected. Are we prepared, against such antagonists as these, not only to draw the sword, but to cast away the scabbard? (*H. Christmas, M.A.*) Moses called Oshea . . . Jehoshua.—*The change of Joshua's name*:—Originally called Hoshea, or Salvation, this name was changed, when he led the spies, to Jehoshua, or The Lord is Salvation. And it has never ceased to seem significant to the Christian that this name of Joshua should have been that by which our Lord was called. In its Greek form, "Jesus," it was given to Him because He was to save His people from their sins. By His distinctive name among men He was linked to Joshua, and in the salvation He accomplishes for His people we are therefore led to expect the same leading characteristics as distinguished the salvation of Israel by Joshua. 1. We are, in the first place, reminded by this parallel that the help afforded to us in Christ is God's help, and this in a fuller sense than was true in Israel's case. 2. Again, we are reminded by this parallel, that as in the conquest of the land by Joshua, so in our salvation, is there a somewhat perplexing mixture of miracle and hard fighting. Sometimes the rivers that flow deep before us open at our approach, and we pass over dryshod. At other times we are allowed to fall into ambuscades. And just as the Israelites, when they found the Jordan open before them and the walls of Jericho fall down, supposed that the conquest of the land was to be completed without their drawing their swords, and were in consequence defeated before Ai, so are the great mass of those who enter the Christian life presuming that God will give them the land of uprightness, purity of heart, and holiness of life, with scarcely an effort on their part. And therefore, though there was miracle on the side of Israel, yet this rule was distinctly laid down as the rule by which the territory was allotted to the tribes, that each was to have what each could take, and hold against the enemy. This is the law of our acquisitions also. What becomes really ours is what we fight for inch by inch, killing as we go, slaughtering the obstinate foe on his own soil, so that the property be left to us uncontested. God's grant is useless to us if we will not draw the sword and conquer it, if we will not wield the axe and clear it. These two united form the strongest of titles, God's grant and our own conquest. (*Marcus Dods, D.D.*)

Vers. 23, 24. The place was called the brook Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes.—*Grapes of Eshcol*:—I. THE TRUE INQUIRERS INTO THE DIVINE WILL EVER HAVE THEIR REWARD. There are grapes for every student of God's Book. II. THE REGION PROMISED TO THE GOOD IS RICH IN BLESSING. Their highest enjoyments on earth are only the taste of a few grapes of the heavenly world. III. THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE HUMAN FAMILY HAVE EVER BEEN MARKED BY MEANNESS OF SOUL. Not only did these specimens fail to inspire the millions of Israel to go and take possession of the land, but even ten out of the twelve discoverers lost heart. Talk not of majorities! (*Homilist.*) *Glimpses of the promised land*:—I. CONSIDER THE NARRATIVE ITSELF. 1. The evil report. Not one word of encouragement do they offer—no reference do they make to that Divine protection which they had experienced during their perilous search—no exhortation do they utter, urging the people to obey the Divine command. Their report was essentially an "evil" one, calculated to dishearten the people—to raise prejudices in their minds. Now the conduct of these spies has always, and I think rightly, been regarded as illustrative of the conduct of those who are dismayed by the difficulties which attend a religious life. For it cannot be denied that these are numerous and formidable. This does not admit of a doubt and it ought not to be concealed. 2. Very different was the testimony which Caleb and Joshua bore. These faithful men thought and acted for themselves. Singularity for its own sake is always to be avoided, since it may arise from a desire to attract notice and thus be the mere offspring of vanity. But when truth is concerned, then, though we should stand alone, it becomes us to avow it. There never was a more false or dangerous maxim than that the voice of the people is the voice of God: it is much more frequently the voice of the devil—the voice of impulses which he has excited and of passions which he has stirred. II. CONSIDER THE SPIRITUAL LESSONS which this narrative suggests. *Glimpses of the promised land*! No Christian is without them, for there are foretastes of heaven even on earth. 1. There are glimpses of the promised land which we obtain by faith. God has discovered to us in His Word a better country, and though a wise reserve is maintained, yet much information is afforded us with regard to it. 2. There are glimpses of the promised land which we obtain when we possess th:

first-fruits of the Spirit. In the grace that you now receive you have a type of the glory which is yet to be revealed. In the peace which you now enjoy, you have a type of the perfect happiness you will soon experience. In the purity which you now possess you have a type of the spotless holiness in which you will be hereafter arrayed. In the communion which you now hold with God you have a type of that more intimate fellowship which is the privilege of heaven. 3. Glimpses of the promised land are often vouchsafed to the Christian at an early stage of his experience. But there was much for us to learn, and God sent us into the wilderness to learn it. After all, our experience was superficial—our feelings were stronger than our principles—our faith needed trial, and so, like the Israelites we have been “led about and instructed.” Do not complain, therefore, because your experience is not what it once was. God gave you, at the outset of your Christian career, a glimpse of the promised land, and the memory of this may cheer you now when you mourn because of the travel and toil of the wilderness. 4. Glimpses of the promised land are often enjoyed by the believer at the close of life. This is not invariably the case, but it frequently is so, as a reward for eminent piety. (*H. J. Gamble.*)

A cluster of gospel grapes.—Strabo states that in Bible times and in Bible lands there were grape-vines so large that it took two men with outstretched arms to reach round them, and he says there were clusters two cubits in length, or twice the length from the elbow to the tip of the long finger. And Achaicus, dwelling in those lands, tells us that during the time he was smitten with fever one grape would slake his thirst for the whole day. No wonder, then, that in these Bible times two men thought it worth their while to put their strength together to carry down one cluster of grapes from the promised land. But I bring you a larger cluster from the heavenly Eshcol—a cluster of hopes, a cluster of prospects, a cluster of Christian consolations; and I am expecting that one taste of it will rouse up your appetite for the heavenly Canaan. 1. First, I console you with the Divinely sanctioned idea that your departed friends are as much yours now as they ever were. That child, O stricken mother! is as much yours this morning as in the solemn hour when God put it against your heart and said as of old, “Take this child and nurse it for Me, and I will give thee thy wages.” It is no mere whim. It is a Divinely-planted principle in the soul, and God certainly would not plant a lie, and He would not culture a lie! 2. But I console you again with the fact of your present acquaintanceship and communication with your departed friends. 3. I console you still further with the idea of a resurrection. On that day you will get back your Christian dead. There is where the comfort comes in. And oh, the reunion; oh, the embrace after so long an absence! Comfort one another with these words. (*T. de Witt Talmage.*)

Eshcol.—Contemplate that cluster which they bear—that earnest of rich fields. These grapes are proof of Canaan’s exuberant fertility. So, too, there is a heavenly Eshcol before faith’s eye. It shows delicious clusters. The joy before Christ cheered His heart. The joy before us should gird up our loins. This cluster was the vine’s perfection. So, too, perfection is the essence of our heaven. Nothing can enter there to stain, &c. Oh, what a contrast to our present state! In the true Eshcol’s cluster there is this richer fruit; Jesus is seen. This is the crown of heaven. The rising of the sun makes day. The presence of the king constitutes the court. The revelation of the Lord, without one intervening cloud, is the grand glory of the endless kingdom. Believer, what will it be to gaze on the manifested beauty of Him who is altogether lovely! What, to comprehend all that Jesus is! What, never to lose sight of Him! Are you a traveller towards this heaven? (*Dean Law.*)

Foretastes of heaven.—Land-birds of beautiful plumage greeted Columbus days before his eye caught a glimpse of the New World. A more southern voyager found himself in the fresh water of the Amazon before discovering the continent whence they came. So at the close of life’s voyage do birds of paradise come hitherward, careering on bright wings, and the river of life sends its refreshing current far out into the briny sea of this world. *The pomegranate*.—People in the East have always been fond of using fruits and flowers as symbols. Thus lots of pomegranates were carved as sacred emblems upon Jachin and Boaz, the two chief pillars in the temple (1 Kings vii. 18), embroidered on the priest’s garments (Exod. xxviii. 33). 1. Our religion should be DELIGHTFUL. The pomegranate is delightful to every sense; for it gladdens the eye, and is a favourite ornament. Its leaf is bright green and lustrous; its wood is yellow and graceful; its blossom is well shaped and scarlet. The good is the beautiful, beautiful with God’s beauty. The pomegranate is also very fragrant. It sweetens the air and breathes benediction all around. You should behold flowers and plants not with

the eyes of the gardener who plants them, nor of the child who plucks them, nor of the merchant who buys them, but of the Christian who finds in them sweet suggestions of the love of God. The pomegranate is also delightful to the taste, for its juice is very delicious. It was also in Bible times very delightful to the mind: for, like the olive it was an emblem of peace. Invading armies cut down the fruit trees, and one of the first to fall before the sword and fire was the pomegranate, as it was a shrub rather than a tree. This was one reason why it was so popular, as it was a sign of long-continued peace. It was thus a token of the religion of peace. II. Our religion, like the pomegranate, should be **VERY USEFUL**. It was good for medicine. Every part of it had healing virtue, and it heals several of the diseases that are most common in the East—sore throat, dysentery, &c. You know that all green things are literally for the healing of the nations. The religion of Jesus, when real in the heart, always sweetens the breath of society and heals many sores. Our plant is also good for drink. It is very juicy, and has a remarkable quality of quenching thirst in these hot climes. Its delicate juice is often manufactured into wine, and is a great favourite with the sick, and indeed with all classes. It is also good for food. Do not suppose that the religion of Jesus is good for the world to come but not good for this. It is the sincere Christian alone who gets out of this present life all the good it can yield him. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you. III. Our religion, like the pomegranate, should be **VERY FRUITFUL**—fruitful both in ourselves and in the world. When our Saviour speaks of the fruit bearing of His disciples, He means such rich fruit as you find on the Syrian soil, and under the wonder-working Syrian sun. We never see anything like it in our cloudy clime. Why, the seeds in one pomegranate might soon fill a grove, if none of them were spoiled. I was assured the other day to a splendid horse-chestnut. I pulled one of its blossoms, but I was disgusted with it, and at once flung it away. It was ruffled and bedashed with rain, bored through by flies, discoloured with dust—I flung away the ragged, blighted, deflowered thing. Many a beautiful and promising young life soon becomes like that outcast blossom. One of the darkest things to me in the world is the ease with which a fine young life is sometimes injured. But if you yield your heart early to Christ, and gladly take Him as your Teacher, Saviour, and Guide, how delightful, useful, and fruitful your life may become—it may grow as the pomegranate. You can set no bounds to the possibilities of good that belong to the very humblest Christian. A portrait of Dante was discovered lately; he was holding a pomegranate in his hand. Perhaps it had charmed the poet as an emblem of what he desired to be. (*James Wells, D.D.*)

Ver. 27. It floweth with milk and honey.—*A land flowing with milk and honey:*—The idea suggested is, that the true disciples of the Lord Jesus are expected to show to the world some illustration of the nature of the heavenly country to which they are journeying. In a sense they have been there, and have come back. But in what sense? 1. The idea with many persons is, that the future condition of man is so completely different from this, that it is out of the question to attempt to form a conception of it. Now, it is true, St. Paul tells us, "that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." But it is also true, as the apostle goes on to say, that "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." Some people, then, are in a position to understand what the heavenly kingdom is like. They have true ideas about it—foretastes. In fact, "heaven" is really the expansion of a life begun here below. "He that hath the Son hath life." 2. What, then, has the true disciple to show as specimens of the produce of this unseen and unknown country? Briefly, the character of Christ reproduced in him, by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is faintly, imperfectly reproduced; still it is reproduced (see 2 Cor. i. 21, "Hath Christed us"). There is the strength which overcometh the world, the peace which passeth understanding, the blessedness of communion with God, the soul-thirst for God ever renewed and ever satisfied. 3. It is by the presentation of these fruits of the land that souls are won. No doubt there are some persons in the world to whom Christ and everything belonging to Christ, are only repulsive; and these will scrutinise the disciple with an unfriendly eye, and rejoice if ever they find, or fancy they find, any inconsistency in his conduct. But there are also many others of a different temper. They are halting between two opinions. They say, not of course in words, but by their feelings and manner, "Be Christ to us; let us see in you and through you what the Divine Master is,

and how He will treat us if we venture to apply to Him"—or, to express it differently, "Show us the fruits of the heavenly land, of which you think so much and speak so much. You are amongst us as a citizen of the heavenly city (Phil. iii. 20). Enable us to gather from your conduct what are the characteristics of that noble land, of that bright and glorious companionship." 4. And lastly, what is the practical conclusion to be drawn from the whole subject thus discussed? Surely it is this—that we, who profess to serve the Lord Jesus Christ, should be careful to recognise the responsibility laid upon us to give a good report, like Caleb and Joshua, and not a bad report, like the ten other spies, of the unseen land. We shall give a bad report if our lives are not attractive, and are not consistent. We shall give a good report if our characters glow, even feebly, with the inner light of the life of Christ; and if, by deed as well as by word, we cry, "The conflict may be a formidable one, but it is not too formidable"; and if we trust as we should do, and may do, that we shall be more than conquerors through Him that loved us. (*G. Calthrop, M.A.*)

Ver. 30. **Let us go up at once, and possess it.**—*The ancient Canaan a type of heaven.*—I. IN WHAT RESPECTS THE ANCIENT CANAAN WAS A TYPE OF HEAVEN. 1. It was a promised land, and the right of possession was founded on the promise. 2. It was a land in which God was peculiarly present. 3. It was a land of fruition. 4. It was a free gift. II. THE ISRAELITES HAD DANGERS, DIFFICULTIES, AND DISCOURAGEMENTS IN THE WILDERNESS, IN THEIR WAY TO CANAAN; SO HAVE CHRISTIANS IN THEIR PROGRESS TO HEAVEN. 1. There are formidable foes to be encountered. The corrupt heart, the evil world, and that apostate spirit, the devil. 2. There are adversaries in timid and faint-hearted associates. 3. The Israelites in their progress were made dependent on the Lord for all things. III. THE RESOLUTION—"LET US GO UP AT ONCE, AND POSSESS IT." 1. The title to it is sure. It is pledged in Christ; as heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. He is our Joshua and is gone to take possession for us. 2. We have means and ordinances by which needed strength is supplied, and we are invited and enjoined to feed in the spiritual manner, and to drink of the spiritual rock. 3. Here we have many foretastes of the good land. (*Sketches of Four Hundred Sermons.*) *Difficulties in the way.*—1. The kingdom of heaven challenges the inquiry of all men. It addresses an appeal to human reason, and to human trust. Though itself a revelation, and therefore not to be handled as a common thing, nor to be tested by common instruments, yet Christianity invites the most careful inquest. It does not seek to rest upon the human intellect as a burden, but to shine upon it as a light. If Christianity may be represented under the image of a land, such as ancient Canaan, then it is fair to say of it, that it offers right of way over its hills and through its valleys, that its fruits and flowers are placed at the disposal of all travellers, and that he who complains that the land is shut against him speaks not only ungratefully but most falsely. 2. Different reports will, of course, be brought by the inquirers. The result of the survey will be according to the peculiarities of the surveyors. As streams are impregnated by the soils over which they flow, so subjects are affected by the individualism of the minds through which they pass. Thus Christianity may be said to be different things to different minds. To the speculative man it is a great attempt to solve deep problems in theology; to the controversialist it is a challenge to debate profound subjects on new ground; to the poet it is a dream, a wondrous vision many-coloured as the rainbow, a revelation many-voiced as the tunes of the wind or the harmonies of the sea. (1) Some inquirers will see all the hindrances. (2) All will confess that there is something good in the land. (3) Those who hold back by reason of the difficulties will come to a miserable end. (a) We don't escape by false reasoning. (b) We don't escape by fear. Application: 1. Some have shown the spirit of Caleb—what is your testimony? 2. Will you resolve, in Divine strength, to follow the Lord fully? (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The decision and exertion incumbent upon Christians in all things.*—1. The passage serves to illustrate THE BELIEVER'S DUTY IN GENERAL. "Go forward." This is the command of God to His people, with reference to every obligation that devolves upon them, and at every critical moment, amidst all our difficulties we encounter from the world. Nothing but this heroism will suit the dignity and the decision of Christian character. II. The passage serves to illustrate THE MORE SPECIAL DUTY OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD WITH REFERENCE TO MISSIONARY EXERTION. And that I conceive to be one of the pressing duties of the Church of Christ in the present day. (*W. H. Cooper.*) *The magnanimous character and wisdom of Caleb.*—1. He "stilled the

people." Stillness engenders thoughtfulness. 2. He seeks to secure unity of faith. "Let us go up." 3. Promptness. "At once." 4. He directs their minds to their ability. Conclusion: The world belongs to Christ by creation and by preservation. In God's name the Church may claim Christ's prerogative for the conquest of the world. (*W. Mudge.*) *Good witnesses for God*:—I. GOD HATH EVER HAD SOME WITNESSES OF HIS TRUTH. Nicodemus. Joseph of Arimathea. And how can it be otherwise, for the truth shall never decay from the earth, but be spread abroad from place to place, and from generation to generation for ever (Psa. cxix. 89). We perish, for all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man is as the flower of the field, but the word of the Lord abideth for ever (1 Pet. i. 24). God will have this never to die, never to wither. He hath the hearts of all men in His own hand, to turn them at His pleasure (Acts ix. 15). So saith Christ, "I tell you if these should hold their peace, the stones would cry" (Luke xix. 40), and therefore He can never be without some witness to maintain His truth. 1. This teacheth us that God is most glorious and powerful, and will be known in the earth (Psa. viii. 1, 2; Matt. xxi. 15; Acts xiv. 17). 2. Great is His truth and prevaileth; He hath always had a Church upon the face of the earth, and He never forsaketh it, though multitudes conspire against it, it shall have the upper hand at last. 3. Be not discouraged when the truth is oppressed, because God is able to maintain it, and raiseth up His enemies oftentimes to defend it. 4. This should persuade every one of us how to carry ourselves, namely, that we should not take any approbation or liking of the evil of other, neither ought we to imitate any in sin, how holy soever they seem to be, neither give consent to them by our practice, forasmuch as God's hand hath overtaken them at one time or other. II. THE EVIL OF OTHERS, YEA, ALTHOUGH THEY BE MANY, MAY NOT BE FOLLOWED OF US. The reasons. 1. Whatsoever is in itself evil cannot be made good and lawful by any example, nor by many examples. It cannot be warranted by the law of man, much less by the pure law of God Himself. 2. No greatness, no multitude can save a man from judgments due to the least sin; for though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished (Prov. v; xi. 21). This serveth to reprove many carnal and formal Christians that oftentimes encourage themselves in evil, and strengthen themselves by the example of others. 3. We may gather from hence a reproof of ignorant recusants grounding only upon their forefathers; such as can give no other reason of their religion but that they were born and bred in it (Psa. lxxviii. 8). III. IT IS THE DUTY OF GOD'S CHILDREN TO EXHORT AND STIR UP ONE ANOTHER TO GOOD THINGS. And that for divers reasons. 1. We are quickly hardened in sin. We are quickly dull to all good; exhortation made by others setteth an edge upon us, and putteth life into us (Prov. xxvii. 17). 2. Such as continue to the end are made partakers of Christ, and with Him of all other graces; this ought to provoke us to practise this duty, the rather seeing so great fruit cometh by it, the blessing of all blessings, Christ Jesus is made ours (Heb. iii. 13, 14). 3. We have other reasons used by the same apostle (Heb. x. 25, 26). Fearful judgments remain for all backsliders. 4. The day of the Lord draweth near, and we must take heed that it take us not unprepared; we must therefore stir up ourselves and others to look for it and to long after it. Lastly, we see evil men do it in evil and to evil. They labour by all means to make others as bad as themselves. This also we see in this place, much more therefore ought we to teach and instruct one another, and be helpers to the most holy faith one of another. (*W. Attersoll.*) *A campaign for God*:—The Israelites sent twelve spies into Paran and Kadesh to reconnoitre. I suppose they wanted to see if God's word was true. That's always the way with unbelievers. God had said to them, "Go over. I'll help you. It will be yours. It's a land flowing with milk and honey. All you've got to do is to go and take it." But they thought they would first find out for themselves what it was worth, and whether they would be able to take it. They brought back what we would call in these days a majority and minority report. Ten said that it would be impossible to take the country. All admitted that what God had told them was true about the milk and honey. Only Caleb and Joshua confirmed the Lord in regard to taking the land. All admitted that the land was good, but ten said they saw giants, and walls, and castles, and that the Israelites would not be able to overcome these. I can imagine these fellows in camp, telling their comrades that they had stood alongside these giants, and had been obliged to look up to see their faces, and that they were to them but as grasshoppers. When we believe, we are able to overcome giants, and walls and everything. A lie generally travels faster than the truth. It is an old saying that a lie will go round the world before the truth can get his boots on to follow him. The world always seems to rejoice when-

ever anything goes wrong with religion. So thus he went round the camp and found favour with the Jews. "I would rather go back to Egypt and make bricks without straw again. I would rather hear the crack of the slaveholder's whip again, than encounter these terrors." That's the way the Israelites talked, and that is the talk of the unbeliever. I am one of the spies sent out to look at the promised land. I have found it flowing with milk and honey. Let us say whether we fear anything now. Let us go up at once and take the land. I tell you that it is good. If Caleb's voice had prevailed, the Israelites might have saved forty years in the wilderness. To-day I say that four-fifths of the professed children are not able to reach the land, simply on account of their unbelief. Many persons have told me that I mustn't expect so great a success as I had in the old country. If I don't expect it, I won't have it. We must go at once and take the land. We are able to do it. "Their defence has gone from them." How easy it is for God to pour out His blessings in such profusion that we will not be able to receive them. That was the difference between Caleb and Joshua and the ten. The ten got their eyes on the walls and the giants, but Caleb and Joshua lifted theirs above and saw Him on His throne. They said that it was easy for God to give them that country as He promised. They remembered how easily He had taken them across the Red Sea; how He had fed them with manna in the wilderness, and how He had made the water gush forth from the barren rock. If God wishes to aid you, then you are well able to go up and take the land. That is the difference between a man who has God with him, and the one who has not. The greatest difficulty we have to encounter is, therefore, the unbelief so current among Christians. Oh, would that God would sweep it away! Our God is able to do it. Let us not limit the power of the Holy One of Israel. Look upward and see Him who sitteth on the right hand of God, and press forward. (*D. L. Moody.*) *Caleb's spirit*:—Was Caleb, then, a giant—larger than any of the sons of Anak? Was he a Hercules and a Samson in one? Was his arm so terrific that every stroke of it was a conquest? We are not told so; the one thing we are told about Caleb is that he was a man of "another spirit." That determines the quality of the man. Character is a question of spirit. It is an affair of inward and spiritual glow. Caleb had been upon the preliminary search; Caleb had seen the walls, and the Anakim, and the fortresses, and he came back saying, We can do this, not because we have so many arms only, or so many resources of a material kind, but because he was a man of "another spirit." In the long run, spirit wins; in the outcome of all history, spirit will be uppermost. The great battles of life are not controversies of body against body, but, as far as God is in them, they are a question of spirit against body, thought against iron, prayer against storming and blustering of boastful men. While the cloud hangs over the field, and the dust of the strife is very thick, and the tumult roars until it deafens those who listen, we cannot see the exact proportions, colours, and bearings of things; but if we read history instead of studying the events of the day which have not yet settled themselves into order and final meaning, we shall discover that spirit is mightier than body, that "knowledge is power," that "righteousness exalteth a nation," and that they who bear the white banner of a pure cause ultimately triumph because God is with them. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Difficulties may be overcome*:—"It is impossible!" said some, when Peter the Great determined on a voyage of discovery; and the cold and uninhabited region over which he reigned furnished nothing but some larch-trees to construct his vessels. But, though the iron, the cordage, the sails, and all that was necessary, except the provisions for victualling them, were to be carried through the immense deserts of Siberia, down rivers of difficult navigation, and along roads almost impassable, the thing was done; for the command of the sovereign and the perseverance of the people surmounted every obstacle.

Vers. 32, 33. *They brought up an evil report.*—*The report of the spies*:—I. GOD'S PROMISES WILL ALWAYS BEAR INVESTIGATION. It is true that none of us has entered heaven; but Jesus, who has gone on in advance to take possession of it in His people's name, has sent back an Eshcol cluster of its vintage, that we may know something of what we should expect. He has given us "the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." The believer already has everlasting life; for the regeneration which he has here experienced needs but to be expanded and elevated and sublimated, to become the life of heaven. It is a confirmation of Jehovah's word to him; it is the seal of God Himself to the truthfulness of His promise that he shall yet enter into heaven's own rest. II. THERE ARE ANAKIM TO BE ENCOUNTERED IN THE CONQUEST

OF EVERY PROMISED LAND. Christ has said, "If any man will come after Me," &c., and has urged us to count the cost before we commence to raise our tower. So He would prepare us for self-denial, hardship, and long-continued struggle; but we must not suppose that in all this the gospel is an exception to the general law. No Canaan of success, in any pursuit, can be gained save by the conquest of the Anakim. He who would rise to a position of eminence in the department of literature, for example, must learn to "scorn delights, and live laborious days." He must deny himself many pleasures in which others allow themselves to indulge, and must keep himself, in a sense, secluded from the world, living in his library and at his desk. The man of business who would climb the steep that leads to wealth, must pursue a similar course. He cannot leave his place; he keeps himself chained to the oar; he knows that nothing will avail but work—hard and continuous work; for so only can he conquer those influences that stand in the way of his attainment of his object. It is the same with the artist; and, on a lower platform, with the athlete. All of them have to go into training; and, in every pursuit, a campaign, with its perils and fatigues, comes before a victory. We cannot complain, therefore, if the same law holds in the spiritual life. The giants with whom we have to contend are mainly in ourselves, in the shape of evil principles and sins that most easily beset us; and it is only through self-conquest that we can pass to any external victory. We cannot vault by one spasmodic leap up to the height of holiness, any more than the Israelites could all at once obtain possession of the Land of Promise. "By little and little" it has to be done. It needs prayer, and watchfulness, and constancy; and if we decline to enter upon the conflict, we shall fall short of the inheritance.

III. THE TRUE BELIEVER IS ALWAYS ABLE TO CONQUER HIS SPIRITUAL ADVERSARIES WITH THE HELP OF GOD. It is not a question of feebleness, but of faith. Whether the work we set before us be our own sanctification, or the evangelisation of the city, or the conversion of the world, the principle is still the same. We can do all things through Christ strengthening us; and if we attempt great things, trusting in Him, we may expect to do great things, not otherwise.

IV. THERE IS A POINT BEYOND WHICH IT IS NO LONGER POSSIBLE TO REPAIR THE FOLLIES OF THE PAST. They who will not when they may, shall not when they will. You see this in every department and pursuit of life. Up to a certain limit it seems to be in a man's power, if he choose, to make up for the past; but beyond that limit it is no longer possible, whether he choose or not. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*)

The spies.—I. In the first place, THE UNGODLY WORLD ARE NOT TO BE EXCUSED for that which must, nevertheless, be admitted to be a very natural matter, namely, that INSTEAD OF INVESTIGATING RELIGION FOR THEMSELVES, THEY USUALLY TRUST TO THE REPRESENTATION OF OTHERS. 1. The worldly man looks at a Christian to see whether his religion be joyful. "By this," says he, "shall I know whether there is that in religion which will make a man glad. If I see the professor of it with a joyous countenance, then I will believe it to be a good thing." But hark, sir! hast thou any right to put it to that test? Is not God to be counted true, even before we have proved Him? 2. Again, you say you will test the holiness of Christ's religion by the holiness of Christ's people. You have no right, I reply, to put the question to any such test as that. The proper test that you ought to use is to try it yourselves—to "taste and see that the Lord is good." By tasting and seeing you will prove His goodness, and by the same process you must prove the holiness of His gospel. It will be in vain for you to say at the day of judgment, "Such and such a man was inconsistent, therefore I despised religion." Your excuse will then be discovered to be idle, for you shall have to confess that in other respects you did not take another man's opinion. In business, in the cares of this life, you were independent enough; in your political opinions you did not pin your faith to any man's coat; and, therefore, it shall be said of you at last, you had enough independence of mind to steer your own course, even against the example of others, in business, in politics, and such like things; you certainly had enough of mental vigour, if you had chosen to have done so, to have stood out against the inconsistency of professors, and to have searched for yourselves.

II. With that, by way of guard, I shall now bring forth THE BAD SPIES. I wish that the men mentioned in the text had been the only spies who have brought an evil report; it would have been a great mercy if the plague that killed them had killed all the rest of the same sort. Remember, these spies are to be judged, not by what they say, but by what they do; for to a worldling words are nothing—acts are everything. The reports that we bring of our religion are not the reports of the pulpit, not the reports that we utter with our lips, but the report of our daily life, speaking in our own houses, and the every-day business of

life. 1. Well, first, I produce a man who brings up an evil report of the land, and you will see at once that he does so, for he is a dull and heavy spirit. If he preaches, he takes this text—"Through much tribulation we must inherit the kingdom." Somehow or other he never mentions God's people without calling them God's tried children. As for joy in the Lord, he looks upon it with suspicion. "Lord, what a wretched land is this!" is the very height of poetry to him. He is always in the valley where the mists are hovering; he never climbs the mountain brow, to stand above the tempests of this life. He was gloomy before he made a profession of religion—since then he has become more gloomy still. 2. But there is another class of professors who bring up a bad report of the land. And this I am afraid will affect us all; in some measure we must all plead guilty to it. The Christian man, although he endeavours uniformly to walk according to the law of Christ, finds still another law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and consequently there are times when his witness is not consistent. Sometimes this witness is, "The gospel is holy," for he is holy himself. But, alas! with the very best of men there are times when our witness contradicts our faith. When you see an angry Christian, and when you meet with a Christian who is proud, when you catch a Christian overtaken in a fault, as you may sometimes do, then his testimony is not consistent. He contradicts then what he has at other times declared by his acts.

III. Thus I have brought forth the evil spies who bring up a bad report; and now we have some good spies too. But we will let them speak. Come, Joshua and Caleb, we want your testimony; though you are dead and gone you have left children behind you; and they, still grieved as you were at the evil report, rend their clothes, but they boldly stand to it that the land they have passed through is an exceeding good land. One of the best spies I have ever met with is an aged Christian. I remember to have heard him stand up and tell what he thought of religion. He was a blind old man, who for twenty years had not seen the light of the sun. His grey locks hung from his brow and floated over his shoulders. He stood up at the table of the Lord, and thus addressed us:—"Brethren and sisters, I shall soon be taken from you; in a few more months I shall gather up my feet upon my bed, and sleep with my fathers. I have not the tongue of the learned, nor the mind of the eloquent, but I desire, before I go, to bear one public testimony to God. Fifty and six years have I served Him, and I have never found Him once unfaithful. I can say, 'Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life, and not one good thing hath failed of all the Lord God has promised.'" IV. And now I want to press with all my might upon every professing Christian here the GREAT NECESSITY OF BRINGING OUT A UNIFORMLY GOOD TESTIMONY CONCERNING RELIGION. One of Napoleon's officers loved him so well that when a cannon-ball was likely to smite the emperor he threw himself in the way, in order that he might die as a sacrifice for his master. Oh, Christian, you would do the same, I think. If Christ were here you would run between Him and insult—yea, between Him and death. Well, then, I am sure you would not wantonly expose Christ; but remember, every unguarded word you use, every inconsistent act, puts a slur on Christ. The world, you know, does not find fault with you—they lay it all to your Master. If you make a slip to-morrow, they will not say, "That is John Smith's human nature"; they will say, "That is John Smith's religion." They know better, but they will be sure to say it. Do not allow Christ to bear the blame—do not suffer His escutcheon to be tarnished—do not permit His banner to be trampled in the dust. Then there is another consideration. You must remember, if you do wrong, the world will be quite sure to notice you. They never think of looking at the virtues of holy men; all the courage of martyrs, and all the fidelity of confessors, and all the holiness of saints, but our iniquities are ever before them. Please to recollect that wherever you are, as a Christian, the eyes of the world are upon you; the Argus eyes of an evil generation follow you everywhere. If a Church is blind the world is not. And remember, too, that the world always wears magnifying glasses to look at Christians' faults. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The evil reporters*:—1. In these wicked reporters see how Moses, that worthy governor, was deceived, for thinking there had been a good choice made of faithful men, the greater part was naught, even ten of the twelve that were sent. So may good men be abused when they mean well, and must not be censured for that which falleth out against their wills. Again, so is the proverb verified "All is not gold that glittereth." The Lord is to be prayed unto to direct our choices; for weak is the wisdom of man, unless the wisdom of our all-seeing God go before and direct. 2. In that they confess it was a land that flowed with milk and honey, observe the rich blessings God bestoweth

upon men, and make such use in your own particular as he did that said, "O Lord, thou givest to me all things fat and fair, I give to Thee all things lean and foul." Again, since the country was so good, and the inhabitants so wicked, let it make you remember the religious houses, planted most usually in places that flowed with milk and honey, and yet the possessors so idolatrous, and every way evil, as the world now taketh notice they were. Happy men are they that consider the Lord's superabounding goodness to them, and make it an argument to press them daily to thankfulness, love, and all obedience to Him both in soul and body. 3. Note the manner of their praising of the land. It is with a "but"; surely say they, it floweth with milk and honey; "but," but what? "But the people be too strong, and we are not able to go up to possess it." Thus do slanderers ever set out their praises. Such an one is a good man, "but." Such a woman is a good woman and a good neighbour, "but." The preacher to-day made a good sermon, "but." No man hath a better servant, "but." So ever with one "but" or other they abate their praise, and sting the party or matter praised in the minds of them they speak unto. The Lord of lords and Judge of judges well seeth this their dealing, yea, the world noteth it, and even they, to whom they, howsoever they hold their peace, secretly in their hearts abhor such smoothing calumniation. The end of it with God may appear by this example as fearful a one as may be read in any history. Which you may see was this, that six hundred thousand of them died in the wilderness, and never entered into the Land of Promise, and the infamy of these "butting" reporters abide chronicled to this day in the Book of God, the chronicle to be feared above all chronicles. In county and country, with great and small, these "buts" towards our brethren and good matters are used. God in mercy work the remove of them. (Bp. Babington.)

Difficulties.—I. There is the Anak SPECULATIVE. He is bred by much of the scientific tendency of the time. Men make everything of law, and forget a personal God. 1. While science has revealed law, it has also revealed marvellous manipulation of law to special uses, viz., telegraph, telephone, phonograph. Now, if man can so use law to special ends without breaking law, cannot God use His own laws, so that they shall come to focus in blessing on my head, and without breaking them? 2. The most capacious mind is most attentive to details. The infinite mind does not find details burdensome. Therefore God can care for me, and help me. 3. The revelation of the Divine Fatherhood; and fatherhood always means care, love, help, particular attention. II. There is the Anak EXPERIMENTAL. He takes such shapes as these—I cannot believe, it is hard to serve God; I cannot make myself love; I have no assurance, &c., &c. If we will only confront this son of Anak by a determined *doing* of precisely what Christ tells us, we shall soon discover that he cannot stand before us and prevent entrance into the Canaan of forgiveness and of peace. III. There is the Anak VOLITIONAL. And he is the main Anak that really prevents us. Two sailors going to their boat past midnight, and getting into it that they might row themselves to their ship yonder, with brains fuddled by a spree on shore, laid hold of the oars and tugged and tugged; and when the morning broke found they had not moved an inch. And with clearer brains and in the advancing light they discovered the reason—they had not lifted the anchor. Ah, how often an unlifted anchor of some known sin is the real Anak keeping back and holding back! (W. Hoyt, D.D.)

Difficulties determine character.—Character, like Achilles in disguise at the court of Lycomedes, does not disclose itself till the trumpet blast is sounded, and there is a rush for armour as besuits it. I. INTELLECTUAL. Schoolboy finds pathway beset with difficulties. They grow, rather than diminish. Nothing will tell its own mystery: how far we shall proceed will depend upon an unconquerable will and intensest application. As answers, we have illiteracy, scholarship, genius. II. SOCIAL. Problems of life and government complex and infinite. A few lead; the multitude follow. III. INDUSTRIAL. We seek and find our own work. Just what is in us will come out. IV. RELIGIOUS. Here, too, difficulties will not remove themselves. Just how we approach them will reveal the infidel, athiest, or Christian. Conclusion: Life, in all its departments, is of one piece and like texture; and its difficulties are for trial, discipline, and mastery. (L. O. Thompson.)

The report of the spies; or, *The difference between truth and facts*.—This was a mean report, it was hardly a report at all—so nearly may a man come to speak the truth, and yet not to be truthful, so wide is the difference between fact and truth. Many a book is true that is written under the name of fiction; many a book is untrue that lays claim only to the dry arguments of statistics and schedules. Truth is subtle; it is a thing of atmosphere, perspective, unnameable environment, spiritual

influence. Not a word of what the truth says may have occurred in what is known as literal fact, because it is too large a thing ever to be encompassed within the boundaries of any individual experience. The fact relates to an individuality; the truth relates to a race. A fact is an incident which occurred; a truth is a gospel which is occurring throughout all the ages of time. The men, therefore, who reported about walled cities, and tall inhabitants, and mountain refuges, and fortresses by the sea, confined themselves to simply material considerations; they overlooked the fact that the fortress might be stronger than the soldier, that the people had nothing but figure, and weight, and bulk, and were destitute of the true spirit which alone is a guarantee of sovereignty of character and conquest of arms. But this is occurring every day. Again and again we come upon terms which might have been written this very year. We are all men of the same class, with an exceptional instance here and there; we look at walls, we receive despatches about the stature of the people and the number of their fortresses, and draw very terrible conclusions concerning material resources, forgetting in our eloquent despatches the only thing worth telling, namely, that if we were sent by Providence and are inspired by the Living God and have a true cause and are intent to fight with nobler weapons than gun and sword, the mountains themselves shall melt whilst we look upon them, and they who inhabit the fortresses shall sleep to rise no more. This is what we must do in life—in all life—educational, commercial, religious. We have nothing to do with outsides and appearances, and with resources that can be totalled in so many arithmetical figures; we have to ascertain, first, Did God send us? and secondly, if He sent us, to feel that no man can drive us back. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The testimony of a Christian life*:—"Now lads," said the late Duncan Mathieson, the Scottish Evangelist, to a lot of boys who had been converted at his meetings, "the people here are not in the habit of reading their Bible to learn what God says to them, but I'll tell you what they'll read. They'll read your lives and ways very carefully to see if you are really what you profess to be. And mind you this, if they find your lives to be inconsistent with your profession, the devil will give them this for an excuse in rejecting Christ." Very true indeed are these words. Would that we could lay them more constantly to heart! The life of the professing Christian is the only book of evidences that many people ever read in reference to Christianity. The Christian professor's life is thus the world's Bible. When there are inconsistencies and flaws in it, then the world makes these a plea against religion. Let us remember that the world's eyes are upon us. Let us keep our book of evidences clear and pure. *Reason better than imagination*:—I think it was Henry Ward Beecher who used to relate how when he was a boy there was no stove in the church which he then attended. Some of the worshippers began to think that they might be better with a fire, but they were opposed by others, who thought that a stove should have no place in the house of the Lord, indeed that they could not get to heaven from a church with a stove in it, but, despite their fierce opposition, the elders by a narrow majority ultimately decided to have it, and accordingly it was procured and placed in the church. On the following Sunday the doubters mustered strong. Some complained of being very warm, and others declared they were nearly stifled, while a few boldly pronounced that the stove had no right to be there at all, and together they made a rush for the offending piece of furniture, to turn it out of the building, when lo, to their surprise, they found it was empty. These people were very bad reasoners, but had a great imaginative faculty. *Folly of exaggerating the enemy's strength*:—It is a bad plan to exaggerate the enemy's strength; to do so is to increase it. Our English warriors have owed many a victory on land and sea to the confidence with which they entered the fight. Francis Drake was playing bowls on the Hoe at Plymouth when information was brought him of the appearance of the terrible Armada. Some were for hurrying away at once; but the great sailor insisted on finishing the game, gaily assuring his comrades: "There will be plenty of time to beat the Spaniards." It is with something of the same dauntless spirit that we should enter upon our holy war. There was real wisdom in the lad's answer when asked what he thought of the first two chapters of Job. He had but just learned to read, and had set himself with firm resolve to read the Bible through from Genesis to Revelation. He had now come to Job, and his friend asked, "Well, what do you think of it?" "Well," replied the child, "I don't like that Satan a bit; and when I get to learn to write, and when I have to write Satan, I will always write Satan with a small 's.'" Alas! too many of us would have to write the word in large capitals if our writing expressed our feelings. Fear and timidity magnify the foe. Let us learn a holier and braver lesson. (*G. Howard James.*)

CHAPTER XIV.

VERS. 1-3. *The people wept.—Truths in tears :—*I. THAT TO ENTRUST THE IMPORTANT AFFAIRS OF SOCIETY TO THE CONDUCT OF MEN OF AN INFERIOR TYPE IS A GREAT EVIL. Feeble-minded, and mean-hearted men, at the head of society, have always impeded its onward march, and endangered its interests. II. THAT WHILST IT IS COMMON, IT IS NOT ALWAYS WELL TO FOLLOW THE MAJORITY. 1. Because truth does not depend upon numbers. The crowds that skirt the base of a mountain cannot see as much as the man who climbs the heights and takes his view from the lofty summit. The solitary eagle sees more than can "the cattle upon a thousand hills." 2. Because numbers in the present state of the world are likely to be wrong. III. THAT IT IS NOT A WISE THING TO FOLLOW THE OPINIONS OF MEN RATHER THAN THE WORD OF GOD. 1. Because God's word is infallible; men's opinions are not so. 2. Because God's word ensures strength to the obedient; men's opinions do not. IV. THAT IT IS A SAD EVIL TO FORGET, UNDER PRESENT TRIAL, THE PAST MERCIFUL INTERPOSITIONS OF GOD. Had the Israelites remembered God's wonderful interpositions in their behalf, the recollection would have given their spirits a moral force, which would have enabled them to bear with magnanimity the greatest trials, and to brave with undaunted hearts the greatest perils, and the greatest opposition (Psa. lxxvii. 10, 11; xxvii. 9; 1 Sam. xvii. 37). V. THAT A LIFE OF SERVILITY EATS OUT THE INDEPENDENCY OF HUMAN NATURE. These Israelites, after their long servitude in Egypt, had scarcely anything of the heart of a man left within them. The only thing that could resuscitate their expiring life, and wake up their manhood, was a system of trial to throw them upon their own resources. (*Homilist.*) *A warning against murmuring and discontent :—*There are three good reasons why we should learn to mind this warning. 1. For our own comfort. Suppose you have a long walk to take every day, but you have a thorn in your foot or a stone in your shoe. Could you have any comfort? No; the first thing to do would be to rid yourself of thorn or stone. Till this was done you could not have the least comfort. But a feeling of discontent in our minds is just like that thorn or stone. It will take away all the comfort we might have, as we go on in the walk of our daily duties. A bishop was once asked the secret of the quiet contented spirit which he always had. He said, "My secret consists in the right use of my eyes. When I meet with any trial, I first of all look up to heaven; I remember that my chief business in life is to get there. Then I look down upon the earth, I think how small a space I shall need in it when I die; and then I look round and think how many people there are in the world who have more cause to be unhappy than I have. And so I learn the Bible lesson, 'Be content with such things as ye have.'" 2. For the comfort of others. A contented spirit is to a home what sunshine is to the trees and the flowers. John Wesley used to say, "I dare no more fret than curse or swear. To have persons around me, murmuring and fretting at everything that happens, is like tearing the flesh from my bones." 3. The third reason why we should mind this warning against discontent, is to please God. No trials can ever come upon us in this world without God's knowledge and consent. He is so wise that He never makes a mistake about our trials, and so we try to be patient and contented, because we know that this will be pleasing to God. (*British Weekly Pulpit.*) *Causeless sorrow :—*Giving credit to the report of the spies, rather than to the word of God, and imagining their condition desperate, they laid the reins on the neck of their passions, and could keep no manner of temper; like foolish, froward children, they fall a-crying, yet know not what they cried for. It had been time enough to cry out if the enemies had beaten up their quarters and they had seen the sons of Anak at the gate of their camp; but they that cried when nothing hurt them deserved to have something given them to cry for. And as if all had been already gone they sat them down and wept out that night. Note, unbelief and distrust of God is a sin that is its own punishment. Those that do not trust God are continually vexing themselves. The world's mourners are more than God's, and the sorrow of the world worketh death. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*)

Ver. 4. *Let us return into Egypt.—The rewards of the future not to be slighted because of a present inconvenience :—*The proposition of the people illustrates anew the principle that all sin is a species of insanity. They proposed to go back to Egypt. How did they suppose they were going to get back? Could they expect

to live in the wilderness without the manna which God gave them? Could they overcome Amalek without Moses to intercede in their behalf? Would God be more likely to deliver them in a cowardly retreat than in a loyal advance? Could they hope again for water to flow from the rock to quench their thirst? or for favouring winds to open a new path through the Red Sea? When some departed from the Saviour, He said to His disciples, "Will ye also go away?" and they returned the pathetic answer, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." But, alas! the children of Israel were ready to go back from the promised land to the dangers of the wilderness and to the hopeless bondage of Egypt. In the words of Matthew Henry, "They wish rather to die criminals under God's justice than live conquerors in His favour. How base were the spirits in those degenerate Israelites, who, rather than die (if it came to the worst) like soldiers in the field of honour, with their swords in their hands, desire to die like rotten sheep in the wilderness!" Similar paradoxes in the conduct of sinners abound in the world. A slight present danger or inconvenience is suffered to blind the eyes to great rewards in the future. A small hazard before us is likely to seem far greater than much more serious dangers behind us. Under the smart of present ills, we are ever ready to shut our eyes to the innumerable ills we know not of. The miners of England cursed the inventor of the safety-lamp because, in reducing the hazard to their lives, it diminished also their wages. Multitudes of young people attempt to evade the trials and self-denials of the ministerial calling or of missionary work, by choosing some profession or business that is more lucrative or gratifying to their ambitions. In this they fail to remember that there is a poverty in other callings than the ministry; that the high-road of selfishness is through a wilderness strewn with the carcasses of those who have fallen hopeless by the way. What is Wall Street but a maelstrom around which are circling innumerable vessels fated to augment the *débris* of countless wrecks already in the vortex? What is the path to worldly glory and fame but a crowded thoroughfare of hungry and thirsty men, the majority of whom are moving on to inevitable disappointment? On the other hand, the path of the righteous, whatever its present shadows, shines brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. (*G. Frederick Wright.*) *The folly of impatience*:—1. It was the greatest folly in the world to wish themselves in Egypt, or to think if they were there it would be better with them than it was. If they durst not go forward to Canaan, yet better be as they were than go back to Egypt. What did they want? What had they to complain of? They had plenty, and peace, and rest; were under a good government, had good company, had the tokens of God's presence with them, and enough to make them easy even in the wilderness, if they had but hearts to be content. But whither were they thus fond to go to mend themselves? To Egypt! Had they so soon forgot the sore bondage they were in there? Like brute beasts, they mind only that which is present, and their memories, with the other powers of reason, are sacrificed to their passions (*Psa. cvi. 7*). We find it threatened (*Deut. xxviii. 68*) as the completing of their misery, that they should be brought into Egypt again, and yet that is it they here wish for. Sinners are enemies to themselves, and those that walk not in God's counsels consult their own mischief and ruin. 2. It was a most senseless, ridiculous thing to talk of returning thither through the wilderness. Could they expect that God's cloud would lead them or His manna attend them? (1) The folly of discontent and impatience under the crosses of our outward condition. But is there any place or condition in this world that has not something in it to make us uneasy if we are disposed to be so? The way to better our condition is to get our spirits into a better frame. (2) The folly of apostacy from the ways of God. Heaven is the Canaan set before us, a land flowing with milk and honey: those that bring up ever so ill report of it cannot but say that it is indeed a good land, only it is hard to get to it. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*) *To retreat is to perish*:—To retreat is to perish. You have most of you read the story of the boy in an American village who climbed the wall of the famous Natural Bridge, and cut his name in the rock above the initials of his fellows, and then became suddenly aware of the impossibility of descending. Voices shouted, "Do not look down, try and reach the top." His only hope was to go right up, up, up, till he landed on the top. Upward was terrible, but downward was destruction. Now, we are all of us in a like condition. By the help of God we have cut our way to positions of usefulness, and to descend is death. To us forward means upward; and therefore forward and upward let us go. While we prayed this morning we committed ourselves beyond all recall. We did that most heartily when we first preached the gospel, and publicly declared, "I

am my Lord's, and He is mine." We put our hand to the plough : thank God, we have not looked back yet. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 6-9. The Lord is with us : fear them not.—*A noble effort to arrest a nation's rebellion* :—I. JOSHUA AND CALEB WERE DEEPLY GRIEVED BY REASON OF THE REBELLION OF THE NATION. II. JOSHUA AND CALEB NOBLY ENDEAVOURED TO ARREST THE REBELLION OF THE NATION. 1. They reassert the excellence of the land. 2. They declare the attainableness of the land. 3. They exhort the people not to violate the conditions of its attainment. (1) By rebelling against the Lord. (2) By dreading the people of the land. III. JOSHUA AND CALEB WERE IN DANGER BY REASON OF THEIR EFFORT TO ARREST THE REBELLION OF THE NATION. "All the congregation bade stone them with stones." See here—1. The tactics of an excited mob when defeated in argument. 2. The folly of an excited mob. This proposal to stone Joshua and Caleb was insane. (1) Stoning would not disprove the testimony, or take away the wisdom from the counsel of the two brave explorers. (2) Stoning would involve the nation in deeper guilt and disgrace. 3. The perils of faithfulness. IV. JOSHUA AND CALEB RESCUED FROM DANGER BY THE INTERPOSITION OF GOD. (*W. Jones.*) *An encouraging declaration* :—I. A SUPPOSITION. "If the Lord delight in us" (Prov. viii. 30). God delights in His Son, &c. He delights in His holy angels, &c. But have we reason to suppose that He delights in His saints? 1. We might conclude, indeed, that He could not delight in them, when we reflect—(1) On their nothingness and vanity. "Man at His best estate," &c. (2) On their guilt and rebellion. Not one but is a sinner. (3) On their pollution and want of conformity to His likeness. (4) And more especially when we reflect on His greatness, independence and purity. 2. But there are the most satisfactory evidences that He does delight in His people. (1) Observe the names by which He distinguishes them. His "jewels"—"inheritance"—"treasure"—"diadem"—"crown" and "portion." See the very term in the text. And Prov. xi. 20. (2) Observe the declarations He has made respecting them. "He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of Mine eye." (3) Observe what He has done for them. Favoured—sustained—redeemed them—given His Son—Spirit—promises. (4) What He has provided for them. "The Lord God is a sun," &c. "My God shall supply," &c. "Eye hath not seen," &c. (5) Eternal life and unceasing glory. II. AN INFERENCE. "Then He will bring us into this land," &c. Observe here—1. The land specified. It is "the land afar off." The good land. The heavenly Canaan. The region of immortality. 2. This land is God's gift. Not the result of merit. It is given in promise—given in Christ. 3. To this land God must bring His saints. Difficulties, enemies, and dangers intervene. He will guide to it. Keep—safely conduct, and at length put people into it, as He did Israel. "Fear not, little flock," &c. "Let not your hearts be troubled," &c. (Rev. ii. 10, 26 ; iii. 5, 12). (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *The boldness and fidelity of Joshua and Caleb* :—I. How SOUND WAS THEIR REASONING! 1. They drew a strong argument from the assurance that the Lord was with them, but that the defence of the Canaanites had departed from them. They spoke of the country itself as worthy of the contest. 2. They reminded the people of the danger of disobedience, as appeared from their past history ; and from the character of God. Sin was the only giant that they had reason to fear. Happy would it have been for the people, had they listened to these arguments. II. How RESOLUTE WAS THEIR SPIRIT! Personally, no doubt, it would have been much more pleasant to remain in the tent ; but viewing this as an opportunity of doing good, and glorifying God, they encountered the shame of uttering sentiments which were reprobated ; and the danger of advising measures which were disliked. Thus numbers in the present day say, "Religion is all very well in its place" ; but they have no idea of glorifying God, and endeavouring to save souls, by acting with the decision that Caleb and Joshua did. We, too, may mourn over sin, but we must do something more ; we must use all our influence to put it down, and to lead forward the Israel of God. III. How UNDIVIDED WAS THEIR AIM! Their one desire was to get the land ; and therefore if popular opinion coincided with them, well ; but if not, they would not be guided by it. They could do without riches, or honour, or life itself ; but they could not do without Canaan. (*George Breay, B.A.*)

Ver. 11. How long will this people provoke Me?—*Mistrust of God deplored and denounced* :—I. THE SIN OF ISRAEL IS HERE DEFINED : "How long will it be ere they believe Me?" Observe that God's account of all the murmuring and fear

which these people felt was simply that they did not believe Him. They doubtless said that they were naturally afraid of their enemies: the Anakim, the sons of the giants, these would overcome them. "No," says God, "that is an idle excuse. No fear of giants would enter their minds if they believed Me." If these sons of Anak had been ten times as high as they were, yet the almighty Lord could vanquish them, and if their cities had been literally as well as figuratively walled up to the skies, yet Jehovah could smite them out of heaven, and cast their ramparts into the dust. Gigantic men and battlemented cities are nothing to Him who divided the Red Sea. When the Omnipotent is present opposition vanishes. "Ah," but these people might have replied, "we fear because of our weakness. We are not a drilled host, like the armies of Egypt. We know not how to fight against chariots of iron: we are only feeble men, with all these women and children to encumber our march. We cannot hope to drive out the hordes of Amalekites and Canaanites. A sense of weakness is the cause of our terror and complaint." But the Lord puts the matter very differently. What had their weakness to do with His promise? How could their weakness affect His power to give them the land? He could conquer Amalek if they could not. Our trembling is not humility, but unbelief. We may mask it how we please, but that is the state of the case as God sees it, and He sees it in truth. Mistrust towards God is not a mere weakness, it is a wickedness of the gravest order. II. DESCRIBE this sin of not believing. 1. At the first blush it would seem incredible that there should be such a thing in the universe as unbelief of God. Jehovah's word is but Himself in action, His will making itself manifest; and is it to be supposed that this can be a lie under any conceivable circumstances whatsoever? Oh, the incredible infamy which lies even in the bare thought of calling in question the veracity of God. It is so vile, so unjust, so profane a thing that it ought to be regarded with horror, as a monstrous wrong. 2. Consider, next, that, though unbelief certainly exists, it is a most unreasonable thing. If God hath made a promise, on what grounds do we doubt its fulfilment? Which of all the attributes of God is that which comes under suspicion? Truth enters into the very conception of God: a false god is no God. Any other doubt in the world may plead some warrant, but a doubt of God's truthfulness is utterly unreasonable, and if sin had not filled man with madness, unbelief would never find harbour in a single bosom. 3. Again, because this sin is so unreasonable, it is also most inexcusable. As it is to the glory of every man to be upright, so it is to the honour of God to be faithful to His solemn declarations. Even on the lowest conceivable ground, the Lord's own interests are bound up with His truth. There is no supposable reason why the Lord should not be true: how dare we then, without the slightest cause, cast suspicion upon the truthfulness of the Most High? 4. I venture to say that unbelief of God's word ought, therefore, to be impossible. It ought to be impossible to every reverent-hearted man. Doth he know God and tremble in His presence, and shall he think of distrusting Him? No one that hath ever seen Him in contemplation, and bowed before Him in sincere adoration, but must be amazed at the impertinence that would dare to think that God can lie. III. THE SIN BITTERLY DEPLORED. We have all been guilty of it. But what I want to call to your remembrance is this, that in any one case of doubting the truthfulness of God there is the full venom of the entire sin of unbelief. That is to say, if you distrust the Lord in one, you doubt Him altogether. The Scripture calls Him, "God who cannot lie." Do you think He can lie once, then He *can* lie and the Scripture is broken? "Ah, but I mean He may not keep His promise to me; I am such an unworthy person." Yes, but when a man forfeits his word it is no defence for him to say, "I told an untruth, but it was only to an unworthy person." No, the truth must be spoken irrespective of persons. I have no right to deceive even a criminal. Do you dare say that to one person the Lord can be untrue? If it can be so, He is not a true God any more. You may as well doubt Him about everything if you distrust Him upon any one matter. Do you reply that you doubted Him upon a very trivial matter, and it was only a little mistrust? Alas! there is a world of iniquity in the faintest discredit of the thrice-holy Lord. Reflect, then, with sorrow that we have been guilty of this sin, not once, but a great many times. Timorousness and suspicion spring up in some bosoms like weeds in the furrows. They sing the Lord's praises for a great deliverance just experienced, but the next cloud which darkens the sky fills them with fear, and they again mistrust Divine love. IV. Lastly, as we have now deplored this sin, we shall conclude by heartily **DENOUNCING** IT. 1. This sin of unbelief, if there were no other reason for denouncing it, let it

be reprobated because it insults God. 2. This is sufficient reason for denouncing it, and yet since weaker reasons may perhaps help the stronger, let me mention that we are bound to hate unbelief because it is the ruin of the great mass of our race. Why are men lost? All their sins which they have done cannot destroy them if they believe in Jesus, but the damning point is that they will not believe in Him. Thus saith the Scriptures, "He that believeth not is condemned already." Why? "Because he hath not believed on the Son of God." 3. We may hate it, again, because it brings so much misery and weakness upon the children of God. If we believed God's promises we should no longer be bowed down with sorrow, for our sorrow would be turned into joy. We should glory in our infirmities—yea, we should glory in tribulation also, seeing the good result which the Lord bringeth forth from them. The man who steadily believes his God is calm, quiet, and strong. 4. One very shocking point about this unbelief is that it has hampered the work of Christ in the world. The Christ that can save is a Christ believed in, but of a Christ who is not believed in it is written, "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The sin of unbelief*:—1. The heinousness of unbelief; shun it. 2. The large number and convincing character of the evidences of Christianity; remember that our faith should bear a proportion to them. "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required," &c. 3. God takes our conduct as evidence of our belief or unbelief; let us show our faith by our works. "Faith without works is dead." "Faith worketh by love," &c. 4. Take heed lest we be disinherited because of unbelief (Rom. xi. 20, 21; Heb. iii. 12–iv. 11). (*W. Jones.*) *God's complaint*:—Two things God justly complains of to Moses. 1. Their sin: They provoke me; or, as the word signifies, they reject, reproach, despise Me; for they will not believe Me. That was the bitter root which bore the gall and wormwood. It was their unbelief that made this a day of provocation in the wilderness (Heb. iii. 8). Note, distrust of God, and His power and promise, is itself a very great provocation, and at the bottom of many other provocations. Unbelief is a great sin (1 John v. 10); and a root sin (Heb. iii. 12). 2. Their continuance in it: How long will they do so? Note, the God of heaven keeps an account how long sinners persist in their provocations, and the longer it is, the more He is displeased. The aggravations of their sin were—1. Their relation to God. This people; a peculiar people; a professing people. The nearer any are to God in name and profession, the more is He provoked by their sins, especially their unbelief. 2. The experience they had had of God's power and goodness, in all the signs which He had showed among them, by which one would think He had effectually obliged them to trust Him and follow Him. The more God has done for us, the greater is the provocation if we distrust Him. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*) *Faith induced by inward discipline as well as by external evidence*:—It seems almost incredible; and yet when we think of it, it is only too natural. It is important to remember that faith is a plant of slow growth. It cannot be suddenly summoned into existence on a special emergency; and in order to its development there must be not only "evidences" presented from without, but a discipline going on within. We are apt to think that because so many deliverances have been wrought for Israel, therefore their faith must have become very strong. We forget that though God had done His part all the way through, they never had done theirs. Their faith was really utterly unexercised. It is not faith, to trust in God after He has wrought deliverance. That was all they did. If they had ever learned to trust Him before the deliverance came, it would have been a different thing. They had had abundant opportunities for the exercise of faith; but they had let them all pass by. They had contracted a habit of distrust. And instead of becoming stronger in faith, they were actually getting weaker; and accordingly when the crisis came, it was only what was to be expected that their courage should utterly fail, simply because it had no faith to rest upon. How shall we stand the test when our day of crisis comes? The answer will depend on the antecedent question, how we have improved those opportunities which have been previously given for the development of our faith. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much." "Weighed in the balances and found wanting." After all their advantages they missed the prize. The appeal of Joshua and Caleb was the last opportunity; they never had another. "The glory of the Lord appeared" (ver. 10), no longer to open up a way for them, but to frustrate their rebellious attack on His two faithful servants, and to pass sentence of condemnation on the entire congregation. Through the mediation of Moses, the lives of the people are spared; but they are degraded from their position as the

hosts of the Lord. (*J. M. Gibson, D.D.*) **All the signs which I have shewed.—Miracles no remedy for unbelief:**—Nothing is more surprising to us at first reading than the history of God's chosen people; it seems strange that they should have acted as they did age after age, in spite of the miracles which were vouchsafed to them. I. Hard as it is to believe, MIRACLES CERTAINLY DO NOT MAKE MEN BETTER; the history of Israel proves it. The only mode of escaping this conclusion is to fancy that the Israelites were much worse than other nations, which accordingly has been maintained. But as we see that in every other point they were exactly like other nations, we are obliged to conclude, not that the Israelites were more hard-hearted than other people, but that a miraculous religion is not much more influential than other religions. II. WHY SHOULD THE SIGHT OF A MIRACLE MAKE US BETTER THAN WE ARE? 1. It may be said that a miracle would startle us, but would not the startling pass away? Could we be startled for ever? 2. It may be urged that perhaps that startling might issue in amendment of life; it might be the beginning of a new life though it passed away itself. This is very true; sudden emotions—fear, hope, gratitude, and the like—all do produce such results sometimes; but why is a miracle necessary to produce such effects? Other things startle us besides miracles; we have a number of accidents sent by God to startle us. If the events of life which happen to us now produce no lasting effect upon us then it is only too certain that a miracle would produce no lasting effect upon us either. III. WHAT IS THE REAL REASON WHY WE DO NOT SEEK GOD WITH ALL OUR HEARTS if the absence of miracles be not the reason, as assuredly it is not? There is one reason common both to us and the Jews: heartlessness in religious matters, an evil heart of unbelief; both they and we disobey and disbelieve, because we do not love. IV. In another respect we ARE REALLY FAR MORE FAVOURED THAN THE ISRAELITES. They had outward miracles; we have miracles that are not outward, but inward. Our miracles consist in the sacraments, and they do just the very thing which the Jewish miracles did not: they really touch the heart, though we, so often resist their influence. V. Let us then PUT ASIDE VAIN EXCUSES, and instead of looking for outward events to change our course of life, be sure of this, that if our course of life is to be changed, it must be from within. Let us rouse ourselves and act as reasonable men before it is too late; let us understand, as a first truth in religion, that love of heaven is the only way to heaven. (*J. H. Newman, D.D.*)

Ver. 12. I will smite them, . . . and will make of thee a greater nation.—Proffer of Jehovah, and answer of Moses:—This is the second time that Jehovah, in His holy anger, had proposed to deal thus with Moses and make him the head of a righteous seed to receive the inheritance which Israel has so justly forfeited. How would any one else have acted in his place? As the offer comes from Jehovah, can the Judge of all the earth do wrong? And if the forbearance of Jehovah is exhausted, may not the patience of Moses well be? Here is an offer that will release him from the thankless burden of a cowardly, degraded people, which has again and again almost crushed him. Shall he not accept it, and not only free himself from trouble, but rise to the greatness in history of being the outflowing stock of the visible kingdom of God? No, Moses has in himself an intrinsic greatness of soul beyond all that, though it may make his name less celebrated. He will not dissociate himself from his people. He will rather be the type of the great Intercessor who is to come. The singleness of heart with which, as a saint, he loves God shall not impair the passionate love that bound him to his people. Yea, and above the love of his people rises his passionate earnestness for the honour of Jehovah. Lying there prostrate on the ground before the brightness at the tabernacle, hear—as you may almost hear in the Hebrew—his sobs in broken sentences, as he argues the case with Jehovah and pleads for his people. “And Egypt will hear that Thou hast brought Thy people in Thy might out of the midst of her; and they will say to the inhabitants of this land, they have heard how Thou, Jehovah, went in the midst of Thy people, seen of them face to face, and Thy cloud standing over them; even Thou, Jehovah, going in front of them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. And Thou wilt make Thy people die as one man. And they will say, the nations that have heard tell of Thee: Through being not able to lead His people into the land that He had sworn to them, He hath slain them in the wilderness. And now, I beseech Thee, the might of Jehovah shall be magnified, even as Thou hast spoken, saying, Jehovah, long-suffering and of great mercy, bearing iniquity and transgression, and not cleansing, but visiting the iniquity of fathers upon children to the third and fourth genera-

tion: forgive, I pray Thee, the iniquity of this people according to Thy great mercy, and as Thou hast been gracious to them from Egypt up to this present time." Do not these passionate pleadings raise Moses nearer than any born of woman to the type of the great Intercessor? And yet, now, with the great Intercessor on his side, the least in the kingdom of heaven, who is truly in Christ—one with Christ, is greater in power than Moses at the throne. (*S. Robinson, D.D.*) *The gentleness of Moses*.—Of Moses it was to be said in miniature what of his Antitype can be said in full—that his gentleness made him great. Not when he parted the waters of the Red Sea, not when he sang his hymn of triumph on the shores of liberty, is he half so great as when he bore the sorrows and endured the murmurings of that rude, undisciplined multitude. If ever a man has inherited the earth by meekness, that man was Moses. His was a grand, unselfish life, made to wait upon the lives of others. (*G. Matheson, D.D.*)

Vers. 13-19. Pardon, I beseech Thee, the iniquity of this people.—*Moses' ex-postulation*.—What book but the Bible has the courage to represent a man standing in this attitude before his God and addressing his Sovereign in such persuasive terms? This incident brings before us the vast subject of the collateral considerations which are always operating in human life. Things are not straight and simple, lying in rows of direct lines to be numbered off, checked off and done with. Lines bisect and intersect and thicken into great knots and tangle, and who can unravel or disentangle the great heap? Things bear relations which can only be detected by the imagination, which cannot be compassed by arithmetical numbers, but which force upon men a new science of calculation, and create a species of moral algebra, by which, through the medium and help of symbols, that is done which was impossible to common arithmetic. Moses was a great leader; he thought of Egypt: what will the enemy say? The enemy will put a false construction upon this. As if he had said, This will be turned against Heaven; the Egyptians do not care what becomes of the people, if they can laugh at the Providence which they superstitiously trusted; the verdict passed by the heathen will be:—God was not able to do what He promised, so He had recourse to the vulgar artifice of murder. The Lord in this way developed Moses. In reality, Moses was not anticipating the Divine purpose, but God was training the man by saying what He, the Lord, would do, and by the very exaggeration of His strength called up Moses to his noblest consciousness. We do this amongst ourselves. By using a species of language adapted to touch the innermost nerve and feeling of our hearers, we call those hearers to their best selves. If the Lord had spoken a hesitant language, or had fallen into what we may call a tone of despair, Moses himself might have been seduced into a kindred dejection; but the Lord said, I will smite, I will disinherit, I will make an end; and Moses became priest, intercessor, mighty pleader—the very purpose which God had in view—to keep the head right, the leading man in tune with His purposes. So Moses said, "Pardon"; the Lord said, "Smite"; and Moses said, "Pardon"—that is the true smiting. The Lord meant it; the Lord taught Moses that prayer which Moses seemed to invent himself. The Lord trains us, sometimes, by shocking our sensibilities; and by the very denunciation of His judgments He drives us to tenderer prayer. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The intercession of Moses for the doomed nation*.—I. THE PETITION WHICH HE PRESENTED. II. THE PLEAS BY WHICH HE URGED HIS PETITION. 1. The honour of the Divine name amongst the heathen. (1) The relations of God with Israel and His doings for Israel were well known amongst neighbouring nations. (2) If God should destroy Israel at a stroke, that also would be known amongst these nations. (3) The interpretation of such destruction by the nations would be such as would reflect on the honour of God. They would conclude that His resources were exhausted; that His power had failed to sustain and lead Israel onward: and thus His glory would be tarnished. (4) That this might not be the case Moses entreats the Lord not to disinherit the rebellious people. 2. The Divine character as revealed to Moses. 3. The truth of the Divine word. 4. The forgiveness which God had already bestowed. CONCLUSION: From this intercession of Moses let us learn—1. How to plead with God for ourselves. 2. How to plead with God for others, and especially for His people. (*W. Jones.*) *God's pardoning grace in the past an encouragement to seek for the same in the present*.—I. GOD IS AS ABLE AND AS WILLING TO FORGIVE NOW AS EVER HE HAS BEEN. II. MAN IS NOW, AS MUCH AS EVER HE HAS BEEN, THE OBJECT OF GOD'S COMPASSION. III. GOD'S PURPOSE WITH REGARD TO THE HUMAN RACE IS NOW WHAT IT EVER HAS BEEN. (*David Lloyd.*) *The power of intercession*.—The intercession of

Christians, who are already formed, is the heaven which is to leaven the whole earth with Christianity. It is one of the destined instruments, in the hand of God, for hastening the glory of the latter days. Take the world at large, and the doctrine of intercession, as an engine of mighty power, is derided as one of the reveries of fanaticism. This is a subject on which the men of the world are in a deep slumber; but there are watchmen who never hold their peace day nor night, and to them God addresses these remarkable words: "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest till He establish and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." (*T. Chalmers.*) *The mercy of God* (ver. 18):—I. WHAT WE

ARE TO UNDERSTAND BY THE MERCY OF GOD. It is His goodness to them that are in misery, or liable to it. Thus the mercy of God is usually, in Scripture, set forth to us by the affection of pity and compassion; which is an affection that causeth a sensible commotion in us, upon the apprehension of some great evil that lies upon another, or hangs over him. Hence it is that God is said, in Scripture, to be grieved and afflicted for the miseries of men. But though God is pleased in this manner to set forth His mercy and tenderness towards us, yet we must take heed how we clothe the Divine nature with the infirmities of human passions. When God is said to pity us, we must take away the imperfection of His passion, the commotion and disturbance of it, and not imagine any such thing in God; but we are to conceive that the mercy and compassion of God, without producing the disquiet, do produce the effects of the most sensible pity. II. THAT THIS PERFECTION BELONGS TO GOD. I will only produce some of those many texts of Scripture which attribute this perfection to God. "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious" (*Exod. xxxiv. 6*). "The Lord thy God is a merciful God" (*Deut. iv. 31*). "The Lord your God is gracious and merciful" (*2 Chron. xxxiv. 9*). "Ready to pardon, gracious and merciful" (*Neh. ix. 17*). "All the paths of the Lord are mercy" (*Psa. xxv. 10*). "Unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy" (*Psa. lxxii. 12*). "Merciful and gracious" (*Psa. ciii. 8*). "With the Lord there is mercy" (*Psa. cxxx. 7*). And so (*Jer. iii. 12*; *Joel ii. 13*; *Jonah iv. 2*; *Luke vi. 36*), "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." The Scripture speaks of this as most natural to Him. In *2 Cor. i. 3*, He is called "the Father of mercies." III. THE DEGREE OF IT. A God of great mercy. Scripture speaks of it as if God was wholly taken up with it, as if it was His constant employment, so that, in comparison of it, He doth hardly display any other excellency; "All the paths of the Lord are mercy" (*Psa. xxv. 10*); as if, in this world, God had a design to advance His mercy above His other attributes. The mercy of God is now in the throne; this is the day of mercy; and God doth display it, many times, with a seeming dishonour to His other attributes, His justice, and holiness, and truth.

1. Preventing mercy. Does not that man owe more to his physician who prevents his sickness, than he who, after the languishing, the pains of several months, is at length cured by him? 2. Forbearing mercy. And this is the patience of God, which consists in the deferring or moderating of our deserved punishment. Hence it is that "slow to anger," and "of great mercy," do so often go together. 3. Comforting mercy (*2 Cor. i. 3*). 4. His relieving mercy, in supplying those that are in want, and delivering those that are in trouble. 5. Pardoning mercy. And here the greatness and fulness of God's mercy appears, because our sins are great (*Psa. lxxviii. 38*). And the multitude of God's mercies because our sins are many (*Psa. li. 1*). Uses—1. We ought with thankfulness to acknowledge and admire the great mercy of God to us. 2. The great mercy of God to us should stir up in us shame and sorrow for sin. The judgments of God may break us; but the consideration of God's mercy should rather melt us into tears (*Luke vii. 47*). 3. Let us imitate the merciful nature of God. 4. If the mercy of God be so great, this may comfort us against despair. 5. By way of caution against the presumptuous sinner. If there be any that encourage themselves in sin, upon the hopes of His mercy; let such know that God is just, as well as merciful. (*Abp. Tillotson.*) *Long-suffering of God*:—We may safely assert that Jeremy Taylor is none the less vigorous for illustrating the long-suffering of God by the Rabbinical story that the archangel Michael, being God's messenger of vengeance, had but one wing, that he might labour in his flight, while Gabriel had two wings, that he might "fly swiftly" when bringing the message of peace. (*J. Pilkington.*) *Great mercy*:—God's mercy is so great that it forgives great sins to great sinners after great lengths of time, and then gives great favours and great privileges, and raises us up to great enjoyments in the great heaven of the great God. As John Bunyan well says, "It must be great mercy or no mercy, for little mercy will never serve my turn." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 20-23. I have pardoned according to thy word.—*God's answer to Moses' prayer*:—I. THE EXTREMITY OF THE SENTENCE IS RECEDED FROM (ver. 20). "I have pardoned," so as not to cut them all off at once and disinherit them. See the power of prayer, and the delight God takes in putting an honour upon it. He designed a pardon, but Moses shall have the praise of obtaining it by prayer; it shall be done "according to thy word." Thus, as a prince, he hath power with God and prevails. See what encouragement God gives to our intercessions for others, that we may be public-spirited in prayer. See how ready God is to forgive sin, and how easy to be intreated. "Pardon," saith Moses (ver. 19); "I have pardoned," saith God (ver. 20). David found Him thus swift to show mercy (Psa. xxxii. 5). He deals not with us after our sins. II. THE GLORIFYING OF GOD'S NAME IS IN GENERAL RESOLVED UPON (ver. 21). It is said, it is sworn, "All the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." Moses in his prayer had showed a great concern for the glory of God. "Let Me alone," saith God, "to secure that effectually, and to advance it by this dispensation. All the world shall see how God hates sin even in His own people, and will reckon for it; and yet how gracious and merciful He is, and how slow to avenge." Thus when our Saviour prayed, "Father, glorify Thy name," He was immediately answered, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again" (John xii. 28). Note, those that sincerely seek God's glory may be sure of what they seek. III. THE SIN OF THIS PEOPLE WHICH PROVOKED GOD TO PROCEED AGAINST THEM IS HERE AGGRAVATED (vers. 22, 27); it is not made worse than really it was, but is shown to be exceedingly sinful. It was an evil congregation, each bad, but altogether in congregation very bad. 1. They tempted God—tempted His power, whether He could help them in their straits; His goodness, whether He would; and His faithfulness, whether His promise would be performed. They tempted His justice, whether He would resent their provocations and punish them or no. They dared Him, and in effect challenged Him, as God doth the idols (Isa. xli. 23) to do good or do evil. 2. They murmured against Him. This is much insisted on (ver. 27). As they questioned what He would do, so they quarrelled with Him for everything He did or had done, continually fretting and finding fault. It doth not appear that they murmured at any of the laws or ordinances that God gave them, though they proved a heavy yoke; but they murmured at the conduct they were under and the provision made for them. Note, it is much easier to bring ourselves to the external services of religion and observe all the formalities of devotion than to live a life of dependence upon and submission to the Divine Providence in the course of our conversation. 3. They did this after they had seen God's miracles in Egypt and in the wilderness (ver. 2). They would not believe their own eyes, which were witnesses for God that He was in the midst of them of a truth. 4. They had repeated the provocations ten times, *i.e.*, very often. God keeps an account how oft we repeat our provocations, and will sooner or later set them in order before us. 5. They had not hearkened to His voice, though He had again and again admonished them of their sin. IV. THE SENTENCE PASSED UPON THEM FOR THIS SIN. 1. That they should not see the promised land (ver. 2), nor come into it (ver. 30; Psa. xcv. 11). Note, unbelief of the promise is a forfeiture of the benefit of it. The promise of God should be fulfilled to their posterity, but not to them. 2. That they should immediately turn back into the wilderness (ver. 25). Their next remove should be a retreat; they must face about, and instead of going forward to Canaan, on the very borders of which they now were, they must withdraw towards the Red Sea again. "To-morrow turn ye"; that is, "Very shortly you shall be brought back to that vast howling wilderness which you are so weary of; and it is time to shift for your own safety, for the Amalakites lie in wait in the valley ready to attack you if you march forward." Of them they had been distrustfully afraid (chap. xiii. 29), and now with them God justly frightened them. 3. That all those who were now grown up to men's estate should die in the wilderness; not all at once, but by degrees. They wished they might die in the wilderness, and God said "Amen" to their passionate wish, and made their sin their ruin. 4. That in pursuance of this sentence they should wander to and fro in the wilderness, like travellers that have lost themselves, for forty years, *i.e.*, so long as to make it full forty years from their coming out of Egypt to their entrance into Canaan (vers. 33, 34). Thus long they were kept wandering—(1) To answer the number of the days in which the spies were searching the land. They were content to wait forty days for the testimony of men because they could not take God's word; and therefore justly are they kept forty years waiting for the performance of God's promise. (2) That hereby they might be brought to repentance, and find mercy with God in the other world, whatever became of them in this. (3) That they

might sensibly feel what a dangerous thing it is for God's covenant people to break with Him. "Ye shall know My breach of promise, both the causes of it—that it is procured by your sin, for God never leaves any till they first leave Him; and the consequences of it—that it will produce your ruin. You are quite undone when you are thrown out of the covenant." (4) That a new generation might in this time be raised up, which could not be done all of a sudden. V. THE MERCY THAT WAS MIXED WITH THIS SEVERE SENTENCE. 1. Mercy to Caleb and Joshua; that though they should wander with the rest in the wilderness, yet they, and they only of all that were now above twenty years old, should survive the years of banishment and live to enter Canaan. 2. Mercy to the children even of these rebels. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*)

All the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.—*The earth filled with the glory of the Lord*:—I. THE IMPORT OF THE PROMISE BEFORE US. Glory is the manifestation of excellence. The glory of God is that display of His most blessed character and will which opens the way for His intelligent creatures to know, to love, and to obey Him. This glory is exhibited in various ways. It shines in all the works of creation. All the works of God, we are told, praise Him. Again, the glory of God is manifested by the works of His providence. But above all is the glory of God displayed in the work of redemption. Now, when the gospel, which proclaims this plan of mercy, shall be preached and received throughout the world, when every kindred and people and nation and tongue shall not only be instructed in its sublime doctrines, but also brought under its benign and sanctifying power, then, with emphatic propriety, may it be said that "the earth is filled," &c. II.

WHAT REASON HAVE WE FOR BELIEVING THAT THESE SCENES OF GLORY WILL ONE DAY BE REALISED? 1. Our hope is founded on Jehovah's faithful and unerring promise. "Hath He said, and shall He not do it?" 2. Our confidence that the religion of Christ will one day fill the whole earth with its glory is confirmed by the consideration that this religion is, in its nature, adapted above all others to be a universal religion. Its doctrines, its worship, and its system of moral duty are all equally adapted to universality. 3. The present aspect of the world furnishes much reason to hope that the accomplishment of this promise is drawing nigh. III. WHAT IS OUR PRESENT DUTY IN RELATION TO THE PROMISE BEFORE US. 1. Undoubtedly our first duty is to believe the promise. Unbelief poisons the very fountain of Christian confidence, cuts the nerves of all spiritual exertion, and tends to despondency. 2. Another duty incumbent upon us in relation to this promise is to labour and pray without ceasing for its accomplishment. 3. A third duty in relation to the promise in the text is that in labouring for the spread of the gospel no adverse occurrence, however painful, ought to discourage us or at all to weaken either our confidence or our efforts. 4. A further duty in reference to the promise before us is that we pray without ceasing for the power of the Holy Spirit, to render all the means which are employed for its accomplishment effectual. (*S. Miller.*) *God's glory*:—When you understand that the glory of God is not self-laudation, nor enriching His own power, nor multiplying His own treasures, but that it is supremely to make others happy; when you understand that the glory of God means loving other people and not Himself, mercy and not selfishness, the distribution of His bounty and not the hoarding it up; when you understand that God sits with all the infinite stores of redemptive love only to shed them abroad upon men for ever and for ever, then you form a conception of what it is for God to reign for His own glory. If love is His glory; if generosity is His glory; if giving is His glory; if thinking of the poor is His glory; if strengthening the weak is His glory; if standing as the defender of the wronged is His glory; if loving and watching over every being that He has created for ever and for ever is His glory, then blessed be that teaching which represents that God does reign for His own glory. That is a glory which is worthy of the Divine royalty. It will bring out blossoms of joy and gladness in heaven and on earth. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The majestic consummation*:—Progress must be gradual toward that majestic consummation which shed its lustre from afar on the eyes of those in what we call the semi-civilised tribes of Judæa long ago. Progress must be gradual. Men of the world sometimes say derisively that it is very slow. "You say you have thirty thousand converts. What are they among so many?" Well, my friend, will you tell me what great effect has ever been realised in a short space of time? What city was ever builded to its ultimate completeness in one year or in ten years? Your growth here in Chicago has been phenomenally rapid and fast, and yet you go back over half a century and more to see the beginning of your city life. Will you tell me what national literature was ever developed to its completeness in one generation or in five? Will you tell me what government was ever

established in equity and wisdom, even with the heroic efforts of men who gave their lives to its service, in one century or in two? Will you tell me what physical continent was ever transformed from barbarism to the beauty of civilisation in one century or in two? Great works imply always gradual progress; and nothing is more preposterous than to suppose that this immense, surpassing work, which man says is too great ever to be accomplished, is to be accomplished within a few generations. Why, there is an interval of ages between the cave or the skin tent, or the hemlock hut and any one of our modernly equipped houses. There is an interval of ages between the first attempt at a song or a narrative and the completed literature which dates from that attempt. There is an interval of ages between the hollow log floating on the water and the majestic steamship that unites the hemispheres. Gradual progress towards the mighty effect is the law everywhere; and we are simply foolish, we simply entertain the most preposterous notion that can ever come into the human mind, if we are offended because the expectation is not realised that in one year or ten years, in one generation or five generations, the work of redeeming the world unto Christ and purifying it unto His beauty is not accomplished. But let us also never forget that supreme fact that God is behind this progress, and that it never will cease until God is dead—never while Omnipotence has power, never while the Divine wisdom foresees the end from the beginning, never until the heart of God is turned to indifference or hostility towards His children on the earth. There is one banner that never goes down in any battle, and that is the banner of God's truth. There is one army that always marches to success, and that is the army of the Cross. (*R. S. Storrs, D.D.*) They shall not see the land.—*A bitter disappointment*:—It was a weary journey from Kibroth-hataavah to Hazeroth, and thence to Kadesh, probably the weariest of the entire route. Moses spoke of it afterwards as "that great and terrible wilderness." And so at last the hosts came to Kadesh-barnea, on the very borders of the Land of Promise, within sight of the low hills, the flying buttresses, so to speak, of the verdant table-land which first arrests the eye of the traveller coming up from the vast limestone plain of the desert. How welcome that spectacle, after the four hundred miles of journey which had occupied the people for the past fifteen months! Welcome as the land-haze to Columbus, or as his native village nestling in the embrace of the hills to the returning traveller. It must have been specially grateful to the eye of Moses. I. HIS HOPES. As yet God had graciously veiled from him the weary journeys of the forty years that were to succeed. From the words he addressed to the people he evidently counted on a comparatively brief struggle, sharp but short, through which they would pass to their possession (*Deut. i. 19–21*). As he said these words there not have been, deep in his heart, a sigh of relief now his task was almost done and he might lay down his weighty responsibilities? Who can doubt that some such hopes and thoughts as these filled his soul, and whispered the one deep sweet word, "Rest! rest!" No more the daily gathering of manna, because it was a land of wheat and barley, in which they should eat bread without scarceness. Is it not thus that we all picture to ourselves some blessed landscape, lying warm and sunny under the smile of Heaven? Life is pretty hard just now—a march over a great and terrible wilderness, a stern fight. But never mind, it cannot last; there must be respite; the long lane must have a turning, the wilderness-march must have a Canaan. But suppose it be not so! What if He who loves us better than we love ourselves has marked out stations in a desert-march that lead right up to the mount from which we are to ascend to our Father's home! What if we are to fight with Moab, and meet Balaam, and see every one of those with whom we commenced life droop around us! II. THE QUARTER FROM WHICH HIS DISAPPOINTMENT CAME. It came entirely from the people. 1. Their first mistake was in desiring to spy out the land (*chap. xiii. 1*). But the proposal did not emanate from the Lord; it had another origin. As in the case of Saul, the King of Israel, God gave them what they would have. It was a profound mistake. Had not God promised to give them the land, and could they not trust His choice? They had but, as Moses said, to go up and possess that which He had given. 2. Their second mistake was in receiving the discouraging report of the majority of the spies. The difference between the two lay in this, that the ten looked at God through the difficulties, as when you look at the sun through a reversed telescope and it seems indefinitely distant and shorn of its glory, while the two looked at difficulties through God. And the people sided with the ten. Here was a fatal mistake. Unbelief never gets beyond the difficulties, the cities, the walls, the giants. Faith, on the other hand, never minimises them, but looks them steadily in the face, turns from them, and looks up into the face of

God and counts on Him. Note, that they lost Canaan not because of the graves of lust, but because of their unbelief. My brother, do not sit down beside that grave of lust and suppose that that is going to settle your future. Never! Know thou this, that the only thing which can exclude thee thence is that thou wilt not believe in a forgiveness and grace which are like the blue arch of heaven above thee or like the immensity of eternity itself. 3. Their next mistake was in their murmuring, which proposed to substitute a captain for their tried friend and God-given leader. "All the congregation lifted up their voice and cried, and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron," &c. This was perhaps the bitterest hour in Moses' life. They had proposed to elect a captain before, but it was when he was away; but this was proposed before his face. What unutterable agony rent his breast, not only that he should be thus set aside, but that the anger of God should be thus provoked by the people He loved! And as he lay there did he not also, in those dark, sad moments, see the crumbling of his fairy vision, the falling of a shadow over the fair prospect of his hopes, as when a pelting shower of rain hides all a landscape which a moment before had lain radiant in the summer light? So it has befallen in our own experience not once nor twice. We had been on the point of realising some long-cherished hope. We were within a day's march of it. And suddenly there is some one or more to whom we are tied, and their education is not complete. They cannot yet go over into the good land. Because they cannot we may not. And as we stand there the voice says, "To-morrow turn and get you back into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea." III. HIS REFUSAL TO ESCAPE THE DISAPPOINTMENT. The dream of Moses for a speedy entrance into the land might even yet have been realised. If all the people were cut off, and he spared to be a second Abraham, the founder of the nation, it might be possible even yet for him to pass into the good land, and, like Abraham, settle there. And so the trial was put into his life. Satan tempts us to reveal the evil in us, God to reveal the good. So God, knowing the hidden nobleness of His faithful servant, and eager that it should be revealed to all the world, suggested to him a proposal that He should smite the people with pestilence and disinherit them, and make of him a nation greater and mightier than they. "Accept it," said the spirit of the self-life; "thou hast had trouble enough with them." "No," said his nobler, truer self; "it may not be. What would become of Jehovah's fame? and how can I endure to see my people cut off?" There are few grander passages in the whole Bible than that in which Moses puts away the testing suggestion as impossible. And so he turned away from the open gate into paradise, and again chose rather to suffer with the people in their afflictions than enjoy the pleasures of Canaan alone. IV. A CONTRAST TO HIS ENDURANCE OF DISAPPOINTMENT. When the people heard that they were to wander in the wilderness for forty years, till their carcasses fell in its wastes, they rose up early in the morning and gat them up to the top of the mountain, saying, "Lo, we are here, and will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised. But Moses and the ark of the Lord departed not out of the camp." By force of will and energy they sought to reverse the sentence just passed on them. Moses meekly bowed his head to it, and accepted the discipline of those long years. Do not times come into our lives like this? We have come to the brink of some great opportunity, and the prize has seemed within our reach; but by some outburst we have shown ourselves unable or unfit to possess it. God puts us back. He says in effect, "You are not fit to enjoy the blessing yet. You must go back to the common round, sit at the daily task, plod around the dull mill-wheel." But we will not submit to it. "Nay, but we will go up." We will storm the position; we will not be thwarted. It is a hapless and useless resolve. You cannot force the gate. Better a hundred times wait meekly outside, learning the lesson of patience and faith. The obscure journeyings of the forty years will then yield their harvest of blessing. V. MOSES' SOLACE IN DISAPPOINTMENT. Yet there were springs at which that weary spirit slaked its thirst. The sense that he did the will of God; the blessedness which unselfishness always brings to the elect spirit; the joy of seeing the result of the Divine discipline in the growing earnestness and strength of His people; the reception of daily grace for daily need—all these were his. But even better than these, there was the growing realisation that the true rest of which he dreamed was not to be found in any earthly Canaan, however enticing, but in that rest of heart, that repose of the nature in God which is alone permanent and satisfying, amid the change and transience of all human and earthly conditions. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*) *The result of one false step:—A single false step may bring with it irretrievable forfeiture of good when the good is con-*

spicuous and attainable. This is true in temporal things. In all lives there are crises, more or less observable, on which the complexion of all their future depends. Some great advantage is set before us that if improved will be the making of us; but we doubt its value or reality or the sincerity of the offer, or it is not quite to our taste, or we lack courage to encounter the difficulties, to incur the dangers that lie in the way of its attainment. There are walled cities to be stormed, sons of Anak to be fought, and the difficulty and peril are magnified by a timorous imagination. We refuse, and the golden opportunity is let slip and will not come again. There is nothing for us but a life of poverty, obscurity, meanness, of hard, unfruitful toil and meagre results. And in spiritual things such crises also occur, and are as much more solemn as the interests they involve are more momentous. There are instances when the soul is awakened to attend to its spiritual concerns, and the proposal of heavenly good is made to us with such distinctness that we are compelled to determine whether we will labour for the good "that endureth unto eternal life" or take up with what this world offers and can afford. The choice is inevitable. We cannot cheat ourselves into the belief that we are merely weighing the question and postponing the decision to a more "convenient season." We may doubt whether the good that is proposed to us is so essential to our welfare as it is represented to be, or whether our enjoyment of its benefits is really so dependent upon the resolution we then come to. Or we may timidly shrink from the requisite self-denial and labour, and cover up our cowardice under a pretty show of modesty and self-distrust, a doubting of our competency to fulfil the obligations and meet the temptations of a consistent course, and may even plead our fear of dishonouring God's cause by our weaknesses and failings. But, nevertheless, the choice is made, and there is too much reason to fear that it may be made finally and for ever. The Canaan that seemed so near that we could see it with our eyes recedes, and the garish world again asserts the full influence of its tawdry beauties. The blessed vision may never come back to us again. Henceforward we can only look upon "the things that are seen and are temporal." And what is left to us if we make this mad and fatal choice? What is this world but a wilderness, where there is nothing to meet the wants of the immortal soul, where in our aimless pilgrimage we turn back upon our steps, and never reach a goal that can afford us solid satisfaction. Poor, poor portion of those whose aims rise no higher than the beggarly profits which a worldly life can give! And then when at last his "feet stumble on the dark mountains," "naked he must return to go as he came," and nought remains to him but the dark noisome grave and an awful accounting with God. (R. A. Hallam, D.D.)

Ver. 24. My servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed Me fully.—*Caleb's character*:—I. THE DIGNITY OF CALEB'S CHARACTER. "My servant." 1. The Lord justly demands our services. 2. The Lord distinctly recognises His servants. II. THE COMMENDATION OF CALEB'S PIETY. "Another spirit." 1. The commendation of Caleb's excellent spirit. (1) Believing; (2) Courageous. 2. The commendation of Caleb's faithful conduct. He was decidedly, universally, and eminently pious and faithful. III. THE RECOMPENSE OF CALEB'S FIDELITY. "Him will I bring into the land," &c. This gracious promise may be considered as partially applicable to the people of God in all ages, and suggests two important truths by way of direction and encouragement. 1. God highly approves of fidelity and decision. Nothing is so important as the Divine approbation. His favour is life. The characters He approves are greatly honoured and blessed. 2. He will fully reward His approved followers. There is a present reward, both of temporal benefits and spiritual enjoyments (Psa. xxxiv. 9, 10; Matt. vi. 33; Eph. i. 3; Psa. lxxxiv. 11). There is also a future reward of eternal bliss. (*Sketches of Four Hundred Sermons.*) *Caleb—the man for the times*:—It is a rough name that—"Caleb." It signifies "a dog." But what matters a man's name? Possibly the man himself was somewhat rough; many of the heartiest of men are so. As the unpolished oyster yet beareth within itself the priceless pearl, so oftentimes a rugged exterior covereth worth. A dog, moreover, is not all badness. It hath this virtue, that it followeth its master; and therein this Caleb was well named, for never dog so followed his master as Caleb followed his God. The name, however, has another signification, and we like it rather better: it means "All heart." Here was a fitting surname for the man whose whole heart followed his God. I. CALEB'S FAITHFUL FOLLOWING OF HIS GOD. He never went before his God. That is presumption. The highest point to which the true believer ever comes is to walk with God, but never to walk before Him. 1. He followed the

Lord wholly; that is, universally, without dividing. Whatever his Master told him to do he did. I wish we could say the same of all professed Christians. You see Caleb was quite as ready to fight the giants as he was to carry the clusters. We have a host who are ready for sweet duties and spiritual engagements which bring joy and peace; but as for the fighting of giants—how many say, “I pray thee have me excused”! 2. Caleb followed the Lord fully; that is, sincerely, without dissimbling. He was no hypocrite; he followed the Lord with his whole heart. One of the safest tests of sincerity is found in a willingness to suffer for the cause. 3. Caleb followed the Lord wholly; that is, cheerfully, without disputing. Those who serve God with a sad countenance, because they do what is unpleasant to them, are not His servants at all. Our God requires no slaves to grace His throne; He is the Lord of the empire of love. 4. He followed the Lord constantly—without declining. Having begun when he first started upon the search to exercise a truthful judgment, he persevered during the forty days of his spyship and brought back a true report. Forty-five years he lived in the camp of Israel, but all that time he followed the Lord, and never once consorted with murmuring rebels; and when his time came to claim his heritage, at the age of eighty-five, the good old man is following the Lord fully. Still his speech bewrayeth him; he shows a constant heart. God set His seal upon that man’s soul in his youthful days, and he remained his God when grey hairs adorned his brow. How many professors fail in this respect! II. **CALEB’S FAVOURED PORTION.** 1. In reward for his faithful following of his Master his life was preserved in the hour of judgment. The ten fell, smitten with plague, but Caleb lived. “Blessed is the man who hath the God of Jacob for his confidence.” If any man shall experience special deliverances, Caleb is he. If he follows God fully, God will fully take care of him. When you look to nothing but your Master’s honour, your Master will look to your honour. When Queen Elizabeth sent a certain merchant over to Holland he complained to her, “If I do your Majesty’s business, my own business will be ruined.” “You do my business,” said the Queen, “and I will see to your business.” It is so with our God. “My servant, serve thou Me, and I will serve thee.” Caleb is willing to give his life for his Master, and therefore his Master gives him his life. 2. Caleb was also comforted with a long life of vigour. At eighty-five he was as strong as at forty, and still able to face the giants. If there be a Christian man who shall have in his old age a vigour of faith and courage, it is the man who follows the Lord fully. We gain our old saints from among those faithful young ones. 3. Caleb received as his reward great honour among his brethren. He was at least twenty years older than any other man in the camp except Joshua. “All died, and their carcases were buried in the wilderness, except that man and Joshua the son of Nun.” At their council he would be regarded with as much reverence as Nestor in the assemblies of the Greeks; in their camps he would stand like another Achilles in the midst of the armies of Lacedæmon. 4. Caleb had the distinguished reward of being put upon the hardest service. That is always the lot of the most faithful servant of God. There were three huge warriors in Mount Hebron; no one will undertake to kill them except it be our good old friend Caleb. These Anakims, with their six toes on each foot and their six fingers on each hand, are to be upset and driven out. Who is to do it? If nobody else will offer himself, here is Caleb. Nay, he does not merely allow himself to be sent upon the service, but he craves permission to be allowed to take the place, the reason being because it was the worst task of the war, and he panted to have the honour of it. Grand old man! Would God thou hadst left many of thy like behind thee! If there is some pleasant thing to do for Christ, how we scramble after the service; but if there be a front place in the battle, “Oh, let Brother So-and-so do it.” Do not you notice the way the most of men decline the honour of special danger? “Our friend So-and-so is much better qualified for that; let him take it.” If we were true heroes, we should each of us contend which should undertake the most hopeless, the most difficult, and the most dangerous task. 5. Caleb left a blessing to his children. If I might envy any man, it would be the believer who from his youth up has walked through Divine grace according to his Lord’s commandments, and who is able, when his day comes, to scatter benedictions upon his rising sons and daughters, and leave them with godliness which hath the blessing of this life and that which is to come. The blessing of the upper and the nether springs, then, was the reward of good old Caleb. III. **CALEB’S SECRET CHARACTER.** The Lord saith of him, “Because he had another spirit with him.” He had another spirit—not only a bold, generous, courageous, noble, and heroic spirit, but the Spirit and influence of God which thus raised him above human

inquietudes and earthly fears. Therefore he followed God fully—literally he filled after Him. God showed him the way to take, and the line of conduct he must pursue, and he filled up this line, and in all things followed the will of his Master. Everything acts according to the spirit that is in it. Yonder lamp gives no light. Why? It has no oil. Here is another; it cheers the darkness of the cell. Why? It is full of oil, and oil is the mother of light. There are two huge bags of silk. One of them lies heavily upon the ground, the other mounts up towards the stars. The one is filled with carbonic acid gas; it cannot mount—it acts according to the spirit that is in it; it has a heavy gas, and there it lies. There is another full of hydrogen, and it acts according to the spirit that is in it, and up it goes; the light air seeks the lighter regions, and up it mounts. Everything according to its own order. The real way to make a new life is to receive a new spirit. There must be given us, if we would follow the Lord fully, a new heart, and that new heart must be found at the foot of the Cross, where the Holy Spirit works through the bleeding wounds of Jesus. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Caleb's spirit :—1. There was in Caleb a very reverend conception of magistracy and government which made him still use some word of honour when he spake of the government. As Josh. xiv. 6, 7, "Thou knowest what the Lord said to Moses the man of God concerning me in Kadesh-barnea. Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espy the land," &c. Moses was now dead and gone, yet mark it how Caleb speaketh not of a dead magistrate, but with addition of honour—"the man of God," "the servant of the Lord"—which words being true, as in Moses they were, they equal—nay, they excel—all the swelling words of our age. Most mighty, high, renowned, illustrious, &c. Words given to great personages, to express their honour and our good affection to them. Now this was another spirit from the murmurers and mutineers, and therefore this is rewarded by God, to whom such reverence of governors is most pleasing. And let it ever teach us that as we see the Lord to observe the differing spirits of men, and accordingly to love them and hate them, to reward them and punish them as their quality is, so we ourselves should be ever careful to observe our own spirits, that so we may see whither we tend, and what either in mercy or justice is like to fall unto us.

2. Caleb, when he saw sedition and uproar against the magistrate, rent his clothes for grief, detesting and abhorring in his soul such carriage in men that should obey. This was again another spirit in Caleb most pleasing to God and graceful to Him. Aulus Fulnius, a heathen Roman, meeting his son going to join with Cateline, that traitor, laid hands upon him and slew him, saying with indignation at his villainy, "I begat thee not for Cateline, but for thy country." And surely except we find that even against our own flesh we could in such a case do what lawfully we might with the like speech that for God, for religion, for their king and country we had begotten them, and not for treason and villainy, we have not that edge of spirit that we should have.

3. Caleb had a quiet disposition, not turbulent, not factious, not seditious, but loving order and obedience to superiors—a thing most pleasing again to God, as appeareth by the blessing of him. Adoniah, we know, could not be quiet, but plotting and working till his brother was forced by justice to take away his life, and so make him quiet. Korah and his company will be envious against authority till the earth open and swallow them up. Absalom against his own father cannot harbour a dutiful heart, but must ambitiously be hammering most hateful designs, till the vengeance of God, pursuing such pride, cut him off and hanged him betwixt heaven and earth by the hair of the head, for an example to the world's end to all busy brains and disloyal hearts. Blessed Caleb was quiet of nature—no stirrer of coals; and the remembrance of him is registered up in God's book. He was obedient to authority himself, and an earnest persuader of others to the same, whom had they hearkened unto they had escaped God's wrath and their own ignominy for ever. Oh, sweet quality in a subject, obedience!

4. Caleb had a most thankful feeling of their deliverance out of Egypt in general and of his own in particular, detesting to hear of any return thither again with these mutineers; and this again was another spirit pleasing to God and good for himself.

5. Caleb used to speak as was in his heart (Josh. xiv.); and this again was another spirit than others had, and greatly pleased the Lord. He counterfeited nothing to please men. And what a happiness were it if all men would do so! "Blessed are the pure in heart"; that is, such men as are free from glossing and dissembling.

6. The Lord saith of Caleb that he followed Him still; and this was another spirit than others had, pleasing to the Lord and honourable to Him even to this day. So liveth virtue after death. A blessed spirit this was, and happy had these mutineers been if they had had the like. "Commit

thy thoughts to Him," saith Solomon, "and thou shalt be directed"—so safe is it ever to follow Him. 7. Lastly, to his following join his constancy. He followed God, and he followed Him still, saith the text. Some have hearts to good things, but not constant, wherefore the exhortations in Scripture are many, to move us all unto this. (*Bp. Babington.*) *A man of real integrity*:—But to the young—to those who are beginning life—I would fain speak. I would fain inspire them with a higher conception of the safety and of the indispensableness of high moral qualities. Let not those that seem to be succeeding in life tempt you from the simple moralities of your father's house, which you learned at your mother's knee. I tell you there is no honour in this world like the honour of honest men. There is no honour like that of men whom you cannot tempt to swerve or bend. The dearest and the scarcest thing in the market to-day is a man who is thoroughgoing and clear-headed, who has right intentions, who chooses clean measures for clean ends, and who is unbribable. Why, such a man as that does not want a statue in Central Park: he is his own monument. We have enough men who are honest as the world goes; that is, who are honest as long as they see it to be their interest to be so, and who will never be dishonest except where dishonesty is profitable. We have men who will bend like a Damascus blade, clear round, hoop-like, and spring back on communion day, straight as a sword; but men who can go out into life and stand alone; men who can say, "The kingdom of my thoughts is greater than any other kingdom"; men who say, "I cannot sleep, nor eat, nor live with a dishonest man, and if I were that man I could not live"; men who believe in the kingdom of God—men of that kind are above all price in every vocation and everywhere; and I wish I could inspire the young with the sense that I have of the value of moral elements and with my faith therein; and higher than all others, and the very breastplate of the preparation for life, is a keen and abiding sense of real integrity. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Caleb: the distinctions of a great man*:—1. That all men are not animated by the same moral spirit. 2. That God recognises the particular spirit that animates men, and deals with men accordingly. I. HERE IS A DISTINCTION OF SPIRIT. Caleb's spirit was marked by—1. Independent inquiry. Let us, like Caleb, enter the promised land of truth, and search it for ourselves. 2. Heroic faith. 3. Reliance on God. II. HERE IS A DISTINCTION OF CONDUCT. Caleb followed the Lord "fully"—with all the powers and sympathies of his soul. This includes—1. A knowledge of God's will. 2. A thorough concurrence of the moral heart with His directions. 3. An unbounded confidence in His character. III. HERE IS A DISTINCTION OF DESTINY. 1. Here is a destiny which stands in contrast with the sad fate of his companions. 2. Here is a destiny which he ultimately realised (see Josh. xiv. 6–15). (*Homilist.*) *Caleb*:—I. A servant of God, such as Caleb was, POSSESSES A GOOD CHARACTER. Character is not everything that is required to make one a good servant to an earthly master. But it is the first requisite. He has a good character, and a good character well attested. It was "the majesty in the heavens" who bore testimony concerning Caleb. This leads us from the fact to the source of the good character which the true servant of God possesses. This is revealed in these words of our text concerning Caleb, "He had another spirit with him." 1. The good servant of God has another spirit with his own spirit. He has the Spirit of God with him. 2. The good servant of God has another spirit with his old spirit. He who says, "I will put My Spirit within you," says, "A new heart also will I give you." II. A servant of God, such as Caleb was, RENDERS GOOD SERVICE. A good servant is one who can do good work. The special form of service to which Israel was called, and in which Caleb proved faithful, was that of war. This reminds us that the service of every follower of God is largely a conflict. But when he is of the type of Caleb, and acts in character, then—1. Having full faith in his Leader, he is ready to follow him, and—2. Having no fear of the enemy, he is ready to encounter him. III. A servant of God, such as Caleb was, RECEIVES A GOOD REWARD. The return made to a servant for his services may be of two kinds. He may receive a stipulated wage; but, in addition, his services may be acknowledged by special gifts. To this class of returns for service the rewards of God's servants belong. These may be according to the measure, but they do not rest on the ground of the servant's faith and obedience. They are grounded on the gracious free-will of God. 1. The servant of God is blessed in himself. He receives blessings now, but greater blessings are in store for him. 2. The servant of God is blessed in his children. Not only Caleb, but his seed was to reap the fruits of faith and obedience. So in the spiritual sphere. "The promise is to you and to your children." These shall inherit the land which faithful parents possess. (*A. Paterson, M.A.*)

On following the Lord fully.—I. As the foundation of all, we must look to THE INWARD MIND AND DISPOSITION of him who aims at this character (1 Sam. xvi. 7). There is much meaning in that common expression which we are every day using, of *making up our minds*. When a man says, "I have made up my mind to do this or that thing," we have no security that he will afterwards act rightly, but we have every reason to expect that he will take a firm and consistent course. So also in religion, the great point is to make up our minds; to come to a clear understanding with ourselves on every point which may affect the consistency of our future course. Wayward and divided affections invariably lead to capricious and hesitating conduct. A firm persuasion of God's providence, an intimate conviction of His truth, and an unwavering reliance on His goodness, are the groundwork of a character which is equally "acceptable to God and approved of men," the character of those who "wholly follow the Lord their God." II. A person who is thus "rooted and grounded in love," will be prepared to fulfil the next requirement, viz., that of UNIFORM AND UNRESERVED OBEDIENCE. III. But, as Christians, we must not forget that OUR RELIGION IS ONE OF FAITH AS WELL AS OF DUTY. In fact, the doctrines and precepts of the gospel are so mixed up together, and so dependent the one upon the other, that they must be accepted as a whole, as a system, or not at all. To "believe all the articles of the Christian faith" is as incumbent upon those who would follow the Lord fully, as to "keep God's holy will and commandments, and to walk in the same all the days of their life." If the preacher is bound to "keep back nothing" from his hearers, so, on the other hand, the hearers must "receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save their souls." To "follow the Lord fully" is to accept the covenant of grace in its simplicity; to know, and to desire to know, no other terms of salvation than those of "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." IV. To "follow the Lord fully" is to FOLLOW HIM TO THE END. When we speak of *final perseverance*, we are not alluding to any supposed privilege of the saints, commonly called by that name; as if those who have once been truly converted to God, could never finally fall away from it. On the contrary, we believe that so long as we are in the flesh we must "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling." But we speak of persevering in religion as we do of persevering in any other good work, which is begun with ardour, but which, in its progress, meets with difficulties and discouragements such as mere warmth of temper will never enable us to surmount. We speak of that perseverance of the saints which is pointed at in such texts as Matt. x. 22; Heb. iii. 14; Gal. vi. 9. To "follow the Lord fully" we must pass through all the stages of the spiritual life; we must be subject to all the trials of the Christian course. (*F. Field, LL.D.*) *The upright man*.—1. The first thing to be carefully attended to is your spirit—the motives, inclinations, and dispositions of your heart. 2. A submissive, cheerful obedience to the will of God is essential to the character of an upright man. 3. Consider, as a motive and encouragement to Christian fidelity, the certainty of a large reward. (*Essex Remembrancer.*) *On following the Lord fully*.—I. Let us begin with inquiring WHAT WE ARE TO UNDERSTAND BY FOLLOWING THE LORD FULLY. And here I must observe that no man can follow the Lord at all till once he be acquainted with Him. Before we can follow God we must not only know that He is supreme, and hath a right to command; but we must likewise believe that He is worthy to command, and infinitely possessed of all those perfections which qualify Him to govern the creatures He hath made. Two things we must be thoroughly persuaded of: first, that the laws of our Sovereign are righteous and good; and next, that He is both able and willing to protect us in His service. II. THE DUTY MAY BE CONSIDERED AS INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING PARTICULARS. 1. That we acknowledge no other Lord besides Him. It is to make His will the sole and absolute rule of our conduct, in opposition to our own humour, the temptations of Satan, and the corrupt maxims of a world that lieth in wickedness. 2. It is to obey Him without any reserve or limitation; it is to serve Him with an affectionate and liberal heart, and to do this at all times. 3. It is to follow Him openly, and in the face of the world. It is a profession that is neither ostentatious nor shamefaced; it neither courts observation nor avoids it. The true follower of the Lord, keeping the laws of his Master continually in his eye, performs every duty in its place and season. 4. It is to cleave to Him steadfastly when others forsake Him; and to persevere in His service, even when it exposeth us to the world's hatred, and the persecution of wicked and unreasonable men. I am asking nothing that is unreasonable, nothing that you yourselves can find any pretence to refuse. All I ask is—1. That you should be honest men.

You call yourselves Christians ; and what is my request but that you be Christians indeed? 2. The duty I am recommending is equally necessary to secure the inward tranquillity of your minds ; it contributes to your interest, no less than to your honour. How miserable is the man who hath discord within his own breast ! 3. Our Lord hath in some measure entrusted us with His glory, and called the world to take notice of us, as the persons by whom He expects to be honoured. Oh, how should this fire us with a generous ambition to excel in holiness, that we may exhibit a just representation of the Master we serve, and show that He is in truth what the Scriptures report Him to be—"altogether lovely," and "fairer than the children of men." 4. I am now going to plead with you from love to your neighbours. This is a principle you profess to honour ; nay, if I mistake not, the desire of obliging others, and of rendering yourselves agreeable to them, is your common apology for conforming to their manners, and avoiding the offensive singularity of following the Lord fully. This is a false expression of love. Surely it is no office of love to deceive another to his hurt, or to suffer him to continue in a pleasing mistake, which unavoidably must end in his ruin ; such "tender mercies" would indeed be "cruelty." 5. The reward that awaits those who follow the Lord fully. They shall possess that good land of promise, whereof the earthly Canaan was only an emblem or type. (*R. Walker.*) Caleb :—1. From what I see of him here, I take Caleb to have been, first of all, a thoughtful person, a considering man, capable of being taught, which cannot be said of many. He had seen no more of God than had all the others, but what he saw, he saw, and after he had come through the Red Sea, and looked at the hand of the Invisible One in the wilderness, he felt that that was enough for a wise man ; and so he did not go about afterward, as the others did, to frame doubts or to call every new case different, and say, "True, He saved us there, but can He save us here? He gave us water, but can He give us bread also?" He had no brutal capacity for forgetting, either. When the illustrious moments of God were past, their shining kept with him. He was not so swallowed up in to-day as to forget yesterday, and to say, "Where?" He forgot not how God "had wrought His signs in Egypt, and His wonders in the field of Zoan." On the paths behind us, all along them, are scattered the tokens of a God as wonderful as the God of the Red Sea or the God of the desert ; but, like these Hebrews, we must hear the sharp crack of His thunder again to-day, or we will not so much as know that there is a God. 2. See next the independence of Caleb. The act altogether nearest the godlike is that of a man who, in the face of opinion and of public shame, and against a fiery current of everybody's feelings, even of those who are near to being a part of himself, stands fixed in his judgment of what is right, uncorrupted, and unshaken—a liegeman of duty ! So stood Caleb ; and his attitude is to me the noblest I can imagine. I know it is false and blasphemous, the maxim that "the voice of the people is the voice of God," yet the mere power of universal opinion, universal feeling, is such that no one can exaggerate it, and few withstand it. He who resists it must be something above or below man. And no fine soul can resist it, unless he is under a higher sympathy—a sympathy with a better public opinion and with the nobler society of God and the just. A sympathy with God and with duty, with the welfare of the people—that, and that only, lifted Caleb up clean out of sympathy with the whole degraded nation. 3. See again, not only his independence toward his own people, but his courage. Never was there greater occasion for apprehension. "We are nothing" ; all the people, all the leaders, say, "We be not able," &c. "We are of a gigantic brood, higher and mightier than they all," say Caleb and Joshua. All courage, if it is not merely animal, rests on something higher—rests often on duty and devotion to others. I think an example of this is seen in Arthur, Duke of Wellington. He was unawed, at the great crisis of Waterloo especially, because of duty. When all Europe, and military men particularly, were under a fascination as of magic from the genius and success of Napoleon, who towered over them like a phantom, the Duke had little or no imaginative fear on the subject. He looked coolly and soberly at the object as it was, and calmly confided in his forces and plans, resting on duty and right. And so this was the man whom God appointed to win ; hence Waterloo. He first kept his soul unsubjected, and the unprecedented and irresistible genius against him did not master or overawe his imagination. But the courage of Caleb was far higher than this ; it was against far greater odds, and it was founded not merely on devotion to duty, but on perfect assurance in God. We call this courage, and it was ; but it rested on something deeper and far more rare—on trust. The

heroic virtues of those old Hebrews were not the heroic virtues of Plutarch; they were all that, but much more. Though the obstacles were bristling before him as high as heaven, the Lord on high was mightier. To go forward was to move in the invincible line of right. See, then, in Caleb just the virtues demanded of us to-day. To us—to each man of us—who have always a crowd of discouragements holding us back, creeping on with but half a heart, to us this exhilarating voice comes like a trumpet sounding from that distant time: “Let us go up, for we are able.” We need the joy, the hope, of courage; and that we may have courage, we need an unbounded trust in God. In this story of the old time—this historical picture, seen far back and illumined with miraculous lights—there is nothing old or strange to me; ourselves are there, in bare fact, as we are every day. We see that the land is good—but ah, the giants! We are appointed to reach a wide and rich and peaceable land through enemies. For this, I have said, we need a will which grasps success, and fastens upon it, and will never let it go; and there is no such courage without a fulness of trust in the heart. But this is not all our need. Listen: “But My servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed Me fully, him will I bring into the land.” That is God’s description of the man who wins. “Another spirit”—a spirit the precise opposite of that of the Hebrew mob—and “because he hath followed Me fully.” Wholeness—the heart whole. God does not praise Caleb’s courage and faith, though He might well have done so. One thing fixed the Divine attention and applause: “He hath followed Me fully.” “And him will I bring into the land.” The land—the better land on high—it is for him, and for all such. I sometimes ask myself: Must all this weak race perish except the handful who have a Divine energy in their souls? Ah! Lord God, some of us would follow Thee fully—but our weakness! Breathe Thou light and strength within us, touch us with a better trust, let us see and live in Thy presence, and feel Thy power, and remember Thy gracious promise. And oh, when we have finished our course here “as good soldiers of Jesus Christ,” may we rest in hope, and our record be: “This My servant, because he hath followed Me fully, him will I bring into the land.” (*A. G. Mercer, D.D.*)

The excellency of a gracious spirit:—I. WHAT THAT OTHER SPIRIT IS WHICH A GODLY MAN HATH DIFFERING FROM THE WORLD. 1. A spirit that hath other principles, a better principled spirit than the spirit of the world. Where the spirit is well principled, it is carried on strongly in God’s ways; though the natural parts be weak, though objections against them many, pretences for evil ways fair, it cannot but hold the conclusion, Surely God’s ways are good. 2. It works by another rule. When God erected the frame of the world, which was to last but for a few years, He made all by measure. The frame of man’s actions here must be for eternity, and therefore a godly man dares venture upon no other rule but that which is Divine; he looks at the Word as a light to his feet, a lantern to his steps; knowing that every step he goes is either to hell or to heaven. God (1 Sam. ii. 9) keeps the feet of His saints. His way is like the way of the mariner, guided by the heavens. 3. Another spirit—that is employed about other things; it is not for mean services, but set on work about high and honourable employments. 4. This spirit is carried to other ends; the spirit of the world looks at ease, pleasure, honour, gain, and self in all; it is a low spirit. The most excellent of the heathen, who had the most brave spirits the world had in their time, aimed no higher than to work according to reason, and a natural conscience; knew not what it was to aim at God in all they did: but the spirit of the godly is a raised spirit, looks at God and eternity in all it doth, carries things up to the highest good, and in this comes as near the working of God Himself as may be. Now where the spirit is carried to God as the last end, there the beauty, excellency, glory of whatever it hath or doth is judged according to the reference it hath to God. 5. This spirit hath other qualifications; the spirits of the godly are glorious within. As—(1) It is an enlightened spirit; the light of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, hath shined into it, and transformed it. (2) It is a free spirit (Psa. li. 12). (a) A free, disengaged spirit, not entangled with earthly engagements like the spirits of the world, but a spirit that is at liberty (2 Cor. iii. 17). (b) Free from the bondage of sin. Not brought under the power of lust or Satan. Not in servile subjection to men. (c) Free in regard of slavish fear. Able to look upon the face of God with joy (Job xxii. 26). (3) A sublime spirit, raised high by spiritual, heavenly influences, not swelling by pride; a spirit that hath all earthly things under feet, as the Holy Ghost sets out the Church (Rev. xii. 1). (4) A firm, strong spirit (Isa. xi. 2). The Spirit of Christ is a spirit of might. (a) First, strong to resist strong temptations. (b) Secondly,

strong to overcome strong corruptions. (c) Thirdly, strong to bear strong afflictions. (5) They are generous spirits, as—(a) They are not mercenary, they will not indent with God for what they do; so much as they may get by their service, so much service, and no more. No, they go on in their work, and leave themselves to God. (b) A true generous spirit cannot endure basely to subject itself to any; it knows how to lie under the feet of any to do them good, where God may have honour; but to be serviceable to any man's lusts whatsoever it cannot endure. (c) A true generous spirit is not ready to take advantages against those that are under it. (d) A generous spirit is diligent to return good, as well as desirous to receive good (as David, Psa. cxvi. 12). (e) A generous spirit loves to be abundant in service; it is not satisfied in doing ordinary things; they prize their service as well as their wages (as John xvii. 4). (6) Though sublime and raised as before, yet withal it is an humble, broken, and contrite spirit, one who is poor in spirit; this a blessed conjunction indeed, though it thinks itself too good for any lust, yet not too good to be subject to the least commandment; though not satisfied with mean things, yet accounts itself less than the least of all God's mercies. (7) It is a public spirit, enlarged for public good; not a narrow, straitened spirit. Godliness doth mightily enlarge the heart of a man. (8) It is a sanctified spirit (1 Thess. iv. 8; v. 23). (a) Not such a mixed spirit as the common spirit of the world; hath not that mixture of filth and dross in it, but is pure. (b) God hath set them apart for Himself (Psa. iv. 3). (c) All the abilities, common gifts of this spirit are sanctified, a higher excellency is put upon them than they have in the spirits of other men; weak, natural parts in these are more excellent than the strongest not sanctified. (d) It is able to make a sanctified use of what it hath to deal in; of all the works and ways of God, it makes all to be holy to the Lord. (9) It is a true heroic spirit; it is not discouraged by difficulties, it will set upon things a sluggish spirit thinks impossible; it will go through that which such a one thinks can never be. (10) It is a solid, serious spirit; it examines the ground of actions, compares one thing with another, looks much at the issue of things; and this must needs be, because the fear of the great God and of eternity is fallen upon it (Isa. xi. 2). (11) It is an active, lively spirit, serious, but not sullen, not dull; solid, but not stupid (1 Pet. ii. 5). (12) The spirits of the godly are faithful spirits, faithful to God and men, such as will certainly be true to their principles. 6. Another spirit, it feeds upon other comforts, differing from those that common spirits feed upon. They are spiritual comforts, for they are administered to the soul by a special work of the Holy Ghost.

II. WHEREIN THE EXCELLENCY OF THIS GRACIOUS SPIRIT APPEARS. 1. These spiritual excellencies have this propriety in them—they make a man a better man, wheresoever they are, which bodily excellencies do not, nor all the riches nor honours in the world. 2. These spiritual excellencies are the beginnings of eternal life, the same life we shall have in heaven. 3. This is not only the life of angels, the life of heaven, but the life of God Himself; for so it is called by God Himself (Eph. iv. 11). 4. This makes him, wheresoever it is, fit to glorify God in the world, and so the soul thus endued is not only a glass to represent, but as a glass to reflect upon the face of God Himself the glory of His own image, and that by a principle within itself. 5. These are such as are fit to stand before the Lord, to have converse and enjoy communion with Him. 6. This spirit is fit for any service, any employment God calls it to; it is a vessel of mercy, fitted for the Master's use. 7. This spirit puts a lustre of majesty and beauty upon a man. 8. This spirit makes men fit for any condition that God shall put them into; they know how to yield to God, to find out God's meaning, to carry themselves in every condition, so as to work out that which God would have by it; which men of ordinary spirits cannot do.

III. A DISCOVERY TO THE MEN OF THE WORLD, WHEREBY THEY MAY SEE THAT THEIR SPIRITS ARE NOT LIKE THE SPIRITS OF GODLY MEN. When grace is gone from the soul the excellency is departed from it; as it was said of Renben, in respect of that sin of his. How many a man or woman, who have comely bodies, good complexion, beautifully dressed up, but within, spirits most ugly and horrid; spirits full of filth, full of venom and loathsome distempers; men of corrupt minds, as the apostle speaks. How unsavoury to any who have the least of God in them! It is a rule in nature that the corruption of the best thing is always the worst, as a stain in fine cambric worse than in a coarse cloth. So by how much the spirit of a man is more excellent naturally than the body, which is the brutish part, by so much the corruption of the spirit is a greater evil than any the body is capable of. Spirit defilement is such a defilement as defiles everything you meddle with (as Titus i. 15).

IV. THE REASON WHY THE MEN OF THE WORLD AND THE GODLY CAN NEVER

AGREE. Water and oil cannot mingle; no agreement between light and darkness: they look at them as men whose lives are after another fashion. V. LEARN TO HAVE A RIGHT ESTEEM OF SUCH PRECIOUS-SPIRITED MEN. There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration is from the Almighty; a spirit inspired by the Almighty, and beautified with His heavenly graces; this ennobles a man indeed; it is the ornament of the hidden man of the heart, the glorious clothing of that which makes truly beautiful and glorious. 1. This difference of their spirits from other men is a certain sign of the eternal love of God unto them. 2. The spirit receiving these spiritual excellencies from God's choice everlasting love, receives likewise all other mercies from the same fountain. 3. The Lord hath an especial eye upon and delight to dwell with these who are of choice and excellent spirits. 4. The excellencies of this spirit are eternal excellencies. 5. But principally, these other spirits are most honourable creatures indeed, because they are reserved for other mercies; God gives common mercies to common spirits, but He reserves His choice mercies for choice spirits (2 Sam. xxii. 27). Other mercies (in some respect higher) than the very blessed angels themselves have. VI. A REBUKE TO THIS VILE WORLD, WHO HAVE VILE CONCEITS OF THIS SPIRIT, AND ABUSE MEN OF SUCH EXCELLENT SPIRITS. Certainly the Lord will not always suffer choice-spirited men to be trampled under feet; He looks upon them in their lowest estate as His jewels; but the time will come when He will make up His jewels (as Mal. iii. 17); and then there shall be seen a difference between the righteous and the wicked (ver. 18). God will own the excellency of the spirits of His servants to be the image of Himself; and what confusion will this be to the ungodly of the world! VII. NO DISHONOUR TO BE SINGULAR. SEVEN NOTES TO DISCOVER THAT GODLY MEN DIFFERING FROM OTHER MEN PROCEEDS NOT FROM PROUD HUMOROUS SINGULARITY, BUT FROM THE CHOICENESS AND EXCELLENCY OF THEIR SPIRITS. 1. Where humour and conceited singularity prevails with men, there is no evenness, no constancy in their ways, no proportion of one thing with another in their course; they are singular and humorous in some odd foolish things, but in other things where they have as much reason to be singular, they do as others do. But in God's people you shall see an evenness, constancy, and proportion in the course of their lives; that which makes them singular in one thing, makes them so in all other of the same nature. 2. Those who do things out of singularity, they care less for such things they do out of that principle, when they come to be common, than they did before. But it is not so here in the ways of godliness; the more common they grow the better they are; the more doth God's people rejoice and bless themselves in them, they are the more lovely and amiable in their eyes. 3. Humorous, singular men differ exceedingly one from another, one will be singular in one thing and another in another; but God's people go all the same way, they have the same course with such as they never saw. 4. Proud, conceited singularity acts itself especially in things that are taken notice of by others; if others look not after them, and will not vouchsafe to take notice of them, they quickly grow weary of that they do, and this is the best way to deal with such people, to neglect them. But now the special work of godliness, wherein God's people differ from other men, in which their souls most delight, is in secret things not subject to the view of the world. "The King's daughter is all glorious within." 5. If it were humorous singularity, it would not bring them so much sweet peace and heavenly joy when they are upon their sick-beds and death-beds; and when they have to deal with God in a special manner, to receive the sentence of their eternal doom, how many then bless God that ever He put it into their hearts to go another way, not according to the common course of the world. 6. Surely it is not humorous conceited singularity, because most men who have enlightened consciences, when they are most serious in their best moods, are of this mind. 7. It is not singularity, for we have the prophets, apostles, martyrs, saints of God before us, clouds of witnesses, and every one of them worth ten thousands of others. It is safe to follow the way of good men, according to that in Proverbs ii. 20. VIII. BLESS GOD FOR MAKING THIS DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOUR SPIRIT AND THE VILE SPIRITS OF THE MEN OF THE WORLD. Spiritual blessings have this excellency in them, they cause a man to feel no need of many outward things which others know not how to want; and it is good to be in such an estate, to have no need of a thing, as to enjoy it when we want it. And, further, it is the excellency of spiritual blessings to keep down the body, and to carry the spirit above the body. IX. COMMUNION AND CONVERSE WITH MEN OF SUCH EXCELLENT SPIRITS IS A MOST BLESSED THING. Seneca saw so much excellency that morality put upon man, that he says that "the very look of a good man delights one." The very sight of such

servants of God, who walk close with God, who are careful to keep their spirits clear and shining; truly, it is very delightful, it hath much quickening in it; the uprightness, holiness, spiritual enlightenings, that their souls have, will guide them to advise for God in safe and good ways. X. THAT ALL THOSE WHOSE SPIRITS GOD HATH THUS DIFFERENCED SHOULD IMPROVE THIS MERCY BY WALKING NOT AS OTHER MEN. 1. Your birth is from Him, and therefore it must not be with you as it is with others. Men of high birth will not live as other men do. Hence we read of a custom amongst the heathen, they were wont to derive the pedigree of their valiant men from their gods; to this end, though the thing were not true, yet they believing themselves to be a Divine offspring, they might upon confidence thereof undertake higher attempts than others with the more boldness. Much higher things should those endeavour after who are indeed born of God. 2. God hath put forth another manner of power upon your spirits than upon other men; other men have but a general common influence of God's power let into their spirits; but He hath manifested the exceeding greatness of His power in you; as Eph. i. 19. 3. God doth put other abilities into you that others have not: that grace with which He hath endued your spirits is a spark of His own Divine nature. 4. Your spirits have been made acquainted with more truths; God hath revealed to you the secrets of His councils, of His kingdom; He hath shown you Himself, His glory, His majesty, sovereignty, holiness; He hath shown you the reality, beauty, excellency, equity of His blessed ways. He hath made known to you the certainty, the infinite consequence of the things of eternity. 5. He hath separated you for Himself, He hath taken you into a near communion unto Himself. 6. More depends upon you than upon others; the weight of many services depends all upon you which are no ways expected to be performed by others. What shall become of God's name, His glory, &c.? 7. Your sins go nearer to the heart of God than others. Other men may provoke God to anger, but you grieve His Holy Spirit. 8. The eyes of many are upon you; the name of God, the cause of God is engaged in you. 9. You are appointed by God to be the judges of other men (1 Cor. vi. 2). God will bring your lives and ways before all the world to judge the world by, and therefore they had need to be very exact, and to have something in them more than ordinary. (1) In self-denial show that you can deny your opinions, your desires, your wills; though you have a strong mind to a thing, though you have fit opportunities to enjoy your desires, yet if you see God may have more honour any other way, you can freely and readily, without disturbance, without vexing, yield. (2) Show the excellency of your spirit's enabling you to do that which others cannot do, by loving your enemies, praying for them, doing them all the good you can. (3) Fear the least sin more than the greatest suffering. (4) Prize opportunities of service more than all outward contentments. (5) Make conscience of time. (6) Make conscience of thoughts and secret workings of heart, of secret sins to avoid them, and secret duties to perform them. (7) Make conscience of the manner of performing holy duties, as well as the doing of them, and look after them, what becomes of them when they are done. (8) Rejoice in the good of others, though it eclipses thy light, though it makes thy abilities, thy excellences dimmer in the eyes of others. (9) If thou wilt show the excellency of this spirit in some choice thing, then labour to keep the heart low in prosperity, and an heavenly cheerfulness in adversity; not only contented, but joyful, in a quiet, sweet, delightful frame. (10) Be more careful to know the fountain from whence all your mercies come, and to have a sanctified use of them when you enjoy them, than to have the possession of them or delight in them. XI. AN EXHORTATION TO LABOUR TO GET THIS EXCELLENT SPIRIT. 1. You had need of other spirits, more need than others for the improvement of those great mercies that you have above others. As some fowl that have great wings, yet can fly but little; so many men have great estates, but not having spirits to improve them, they are of little use. Know that your estates are either mercies or miseries, blessings or cursings to you, according as you have hearts to improve them. 2. You had need of other spirits for the improving of the large opportunities of service for God and His church that you have more than others; these are as great blessing as your estates or any other dignities you have above others. 3. You who are in high and eminent dignities, you have the earnest prayers of God's servants in all places, that God would raise you up with truly noble, excellent, and gracious spirits, that you may be instruments of His glory. How blessed you if God fulfils the prayers of His servants upon you! 4. Again, you have need of other spirits, for your example is looked at more than others, either in good or evil. 5. Their sin is worse than others, for it doth more

hurt, and therefore their punishment will be greater than others. 6. And yet, further, you have need of other spirits because you have temptations greater and stronger than others; you are in greater danger than others. The high estate of great outward dignity is a very dangerous estate if God gives not an extraordinary spirit. 7. Above all, you who are honourable and great in the world, you had need labour to be gracious, because sin is more unsuitable to your condition than to others. 8. And would it not be a grievous thing to you to see poor, inferior men and women to be lifted up to glory, and yourselves cast out an eternal curse? Have not many of them most excellent precious spirits? Do they not do God far more service than you? Do they not bring more honour to His name than ever you did? Think then with yourselves, why should God put those who are of such choice precious spirits into such a low condition, and raise me to such an high? Is it not because He intends to give me my portion in this life, but reserves better mercies for them afterwards? 9. The hopes we have of the continuance of our peace in the happy enjoyment of those precious liberties of the gospel, that in so great mercy have been continued unto us, depends much upon the work of God's grace upon your souls. You, therefore, whom God hath honoured with excellent parts, that you may not be confounded another day before the Lord and His blessed angels and saints, be you restless in your spirits till you find God hath added a further beauty to them, even the beauty of holiness, the sanctifying graces of His Holy Spirit, that may make you lovely in His eyes, truly honourable before Him, and for ever blessed of Him. Take heed you rest not either in gifts of learning or in gifts of morality; the gifts of morality are yet a further ornament to men's spirits, but yet they come short of those Divine excellences of spirit that will make it blessed for ever. (1) This other spirit is a renewed spirit (Ezek. ii. 19). (2) This other spirit works from God, and for God. (3) Where true spiritual excellency is, there is a connection of all spiritual excellences, of all graces (Eph. v. 9). (4) Where there are true spiritual excellences there is an impulse of heart, a strong bent of spirit in following after the Lord; there is such a powerful impression of Divine truths upon the soul as presses it on with strength in God's ways, for that it cannot easily be hindered, as the prophet saith (Isa. viii. 11). (5) Where there are only moral principles, there the soul sees not into, turns not from the evil of sin; it sees not such evil in it as to make it subscribe to the righteousness of God in all those dreadful things that are threatened against it, but thinks they are too hard. Surely God is not so severe a God. God forbid things should be so as those we read of in the gospel. (6) Where there are only natural and moral excellences, they do not raise the soul to a love of the strictest ways of God. (7) Where there is only nature or morality, there is no sense of the breathings of God's spirit in His ordinances. (*J. Burroughes.*) *A gracious spirit follows God fully:—I. WHAT IS IT FOR A MAN TO FOLLOW GOD FULLY.* 1. A fulness of all graces; though not the degree of all graces, yet the truth of every grace. There is no grace wanting where this evangelical fulness is. 2. There is no want, no not of any degree, wherein the soul rests; there is such a perfection as the soul takes no liberty to itself to fail in anything. 3. There are sincere aims, as in the sight of God, to attain to the highest perfection, the full measure of holiness; and—4. There is that uprightness of the soul, as it doth not only desire and endeavour to attain, but doth indeed attain to the truth of that I shall deliver. 5. The heart is fully set and resolved for God; there is fulness of resolution; so the Septuagint translates that place in Josh. xv. 8. 6. There is a fulness of all the faculties of the soul working after God; full apprehensions, full affections; the soul is filled with the will of God, "That ye may stand perfect, and full in all the will of God" (Col. iv. 12), as the sails filled with the wind. "My soul and all that is within me praise the Lord," saith David. As it is in giving men full possession of a house, they give up the keys of every room, so here the soul gives up every faculty to God; the whole soul opens itself to receive the Word and His truth. 7. The soul follows God fully in regard of the true endeavours of it to put forth what strength it hath in following the Lord. 8. The soul that fully follows the Lord, follows Him without delay in the use of all means and in all the ways of His commandments. 9. Again, a soul that follows God fully follows Him in all the ways of His commandments, as the Lord saith of David (Acts xiii. 22). (1) It is willing to follow the Lord in difficult duties, when it must put the flesh to it, in duties that require pains, that cannot be done without some hard things attending on them. (2) One that follows God fully will follow Him in discountenanced duties. (3) One that is willing to follow God fully in all duties, he will follow Him in those where he sees no reason

but the bare command of God. (4) The soul that is willing to follow God in all duties, will follow Him in commandments that are accounted little. God expects faithfulness in little things; God prizes every tittle of His law more worth than heaven and earth, howsoever we may slight many things in it, and think them too small to put any great bond upon us. (5) The soul that follows God fully in all duties, is willing to follow Him in duties wherein it must go alone; it is willing to follow God in solitary paths. 10. To follow God fully is to follow Him so as to be willing to venture the loss of all for Him, willing to cast off whatsoever comes in the way, though never so dear to us; to follow Him close whatsoever comes in competition with Him when our following Him will cost us the loss of our formerly most dear comforts and contentments. 11. To follow God fully is to follow Him only, so as to be willing to dedicate whatsoever God lets us still enjoy to God alone. 12. The soul then follows God fully when it carries through the work it undertakes against all discouragements and hindrances, as a ship coming with full sail bears all down before it. It doth not only work, but works thoroughly, works out that it doth. 13. One that follows God fully is willing to bind himself to God by the most full and strong bonds and engagements; his spirit is at the greatest liberty when he is most strongly bound to the Lord. 14. To follow God fully is to abide in all these constant to the end of our days. That is, we must be constant in God's ways, not think it enough to enter into them by fits and starts, but the ways of God must be our ordinary track (Prov. xvi. 17). (1) Wherever the Lord brings any to follow Him fully, He causeth such a perfect breach between sin and that soul as there is no possibility that the breach should be made up again. (2) A second reason why that man that follows the Lord fully must needs follow Him for ever, is because at the first giving up himself to God he was content to let go all other holds and all other hopes in all creature-comforts whatsoever, and so to venture himself upon God; he hath no other prop that he doth expect support by. There is a blessed necessity upon him to follow the Lord for ever, and this necessity the soul is glad of. (3) The soul that follows God fully will follow Him for ever, because in the full following of the Lord it finds so much ease, peace, joy, satisfaction, as it is for ever settled and confirmed in this way. II. THE EXCELLENCY OF THIS FRAME OF SPIRIT. 1. This is truly to honour God as a God; except God be honoured as infinite He is not honoured as God; where God is followed and not thus, He is followed no otherwise than a creature may be followed. This is not therefore to honour Him as a God, but rather it is a dishonour to that infinite excellency and blessedness of His, whereby He is infinitely above all that creatures are, or that they are any way capable of. 2. This full following of God doth much honour the work of grace and the profession of godliness; it shows a reality, power, excellency, and beauty in it. 3. This has such excellency in it, as that God Himself boasts of such as these are; as they glory in the Lord and bless themselves in the Lord, so the Lord seems to glory in them, and to account His name blessed by them, as you may see how God rejoices in and makes His boast of Job (i. 8). 4. This following of the Lord fully doth ever attain its end. III. REBUKE TO DIVERS SORTS WHOSE SPIRITS ARE NOT FULL IN FOLLOWING AFTER THE LORD. 1. As some are convinced, their judgments and consciences are for God, but their lusts carry them violently another way. 2. Others rest in their good inclinations, their good desires; they say they would fain do better, and they hope God will accept the will for the deed; they like God's ways, and speak well of good men, and therefore they think their hearts are for God. 3. Others have good resolutions now and then in some good moods; the truths of God come darting in with some power, as they cannot but yield to them, and then they are resolved that they will do better and their lives shall be changed; but yet these vanish too, they follow not God fully. 4. Others have strong sudden affections, they feel sometimes some meltings, in sorrow for sin, in hearing the blessed truths of God revealed to them; they feel some sweetness in the working of truths upon their hearts, they have a taste of the powers of the world to come. Yet these are a great way off from following the Lord fully. For—(1) These affections are sudden and flashing; the truths of God pass by them, leaving a little glimmering behind them, or as water passeth through a conduit and leaves a dew; but they soak not into the heart, as the water soaks into the earth to make it fruitful. (2) These are stirred with the pardoning, comforting, saving mercies of God, but not with the humbling, renewing, sanctifying mercies. 5. Others follow the Lord, but they follow Him in a dull, heavy manner; there is no spirit, no heat, no life in their following of Him, and therefore they do not follow Him fully. They rest themselves in a lukewarm course; they like well of religion and profession, but

what need men go so far, what need they do so much? As Pharaoh said to the Israelites (Exod. viii. 28). 6. Some go beyond this dull lukewarm temper; they are very forward in some things, but in other things their hearts stick; they come not off fully in them. 7. There are others who cannot be so easily convinced in what particulars they forsake God in any of His ways; they seem to have a general forwardness in that which is good, but the truth is, they follow themselves, and not God in all; they rise no higher than self in all they do, which their own consciences, upon search made, will tell them: the commandment of God may be made the pretence, but self is the great mover in all. 8. Others follow the Lord earnestly a while, but afterwards forsake Him. Many are very hopeful at the first, yet they prove exceeding vile afterwards; yea, the more forward in good at first, the more vile after—as water that hath once been heated, and grows cold again, is colder than ever it was. Let none, then, rest themselves in their good beginnings. The evil of forsaking the Lord were great, if this were all—(1) That all your labour in religion, that all that you have done is lost. It is an evil thing to lose all that we have wrought for; but this is not all. (2) If you leave off from following the Lord, all the good that ever you have done and made profession of shall serve only to aggravate your sin and increase your torment. (3) This leaving off from following the Lord is a great dishonour to God and His ways; an upbraiding of them, as if they were not good enough to draw the heart constantly after them. (4) Such men as these do much mischief in the world; they are grievous scandals. (5) These men shall have their spirits filled with horror; they did not fill up their work in following the Lord; but God and conscience shall follow them with anguish, and fill up their spirits with them. (6) Lastly, these men are hateful both to God and men; they are hateful to men because they go no further, as Heb. x. 38. IV. COMFORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO THOSE WHO FOLLOW THE LORD FULLY. Blessed are you of the Lord, you are honourable in the eyes of God and man, you make up in part that hurt that is done to religion by others. If you be content to give up all to God, to betrust God with all, know that there are many blessed promises full of mercy and encouragement for you; they shall come to you fuller of goodness and blessing than you can imagine. God certainly will remember the kindness of those who are willing to follow Him through the wilderness of difficulties and discouragement (Jer. ii. 2). You who do thus shall die without stain, which few do; your memories shall be sweet and blessed when you are dead and gone. You shall have “an entrance ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. i. 11). This is promised, not only to those that are godly, but abound in it, as ver. 8. They shall be as a ship coming gloriously into the haven with full sail. V. AN EXHORTATION TO FOLLOW THE LORD FULLY. 1. There is infinite reason that our hearts should be fully after the Lord. For—(1) There is a fulness of all good in God; He is worthy (Rev. iv. 11). As that blessed martyr John Ardeley once said: “What, have I but one life to lay down for Christ? If I had as many lives as there are hairs upon my head, they should all go for Jesus Christ.” He saw Christ worthy of all he had, yea, of more than he had. This was God’s own argument to Abraham, “Walk before Me and be upright”; be perfect, for I am God all-sufficient; I have all perfection in Me, and therefore be thou perfect before Me. (2) Consider God might have had full glory in your destruction; let Him not be a loser in His showing mercy to you. (3) Christ hath fully gone through the great work of redemption; He would never leave it till He had accomplished all, and said, “It is finished.” (4) Yea, God’s mercies for the present are very full towards you; His pardoning mercies, and His supplying mercies, with all things needful. This was David’s argument (Psa. ciii. 1–3). (5) Wicked men do fully follow after that which is evil; an infinite shame and confusion then would it be to us, likewise unto God, if we should not as fully follow the Lord in that which is good. I have read a passage in St. Cyprian how he brings in the devil triumphing over Christ in this manner: “As for my followers, I never died for them, as Christ did for His; I never promised them so great reward as Christ hath done to His; and yet I have more followers than He, and they do more for me than His doth for Him. Oh, let the thought of our giving the devil occasion thus to triumph over Christ in our slackness and negligence in following after Him cause shame and confusion to cover our faces.” (6) The more fully we follow God, the more full shall our present peace, and joy, and soul-satisfying contentment be (Psa. cxix. 130). (7) There is great reason why we should walk fully after the Lord, because the way that God calls us to walk in is a most blessed and holy way. (8) The consideration of the end of our way should be a strong motive

to draw our hearts fully after the Lord in it; the entrance into it is sweet, the midst of it more, but the end of it most sweet of all; there is that coming that will fully recompense all. 2. And thus I pass to the second thing propounded in this use, namely, to show what are the causes that hinder men from following the Lord fully. And they are five especially, which I shall but name. (1) Low apprehensions that men have of God; they see not God in His glory, in His greatness; surely they know not God, and therefore it is that their hearts work so poorly after Him (Jer. ix. 3). (2) Unsound beginnings in the profession of religion are the cause why men do not fully follow after the Lord. Their hearts are not thoroughly broken, not deeply humbled. If cloth be not wrought well at the first, though it shows fair in the loom, yet it will shrink when it comes to wetting. The cause why many do so shrink in the wetting, when they come to suffer anything in the ways of religion, it is because their hearts were not well wrought at first. (3) A third cause is the strength of engagements; their hearts are so wrapped in them, so glued to them, as it is exceeding painful to get them loosened from them, they are so near and dear to a corrupt heart. (4) A fourth thing that hinders men from following God fully, it is going out in the strength of their own resolutions, not in any strength that they receive out of the fulness of Jesus Christ. (5) A fifth cause is the meeting with more difficulties in God's ways than we made account of, when Christians think only of the good and sweet that they shall meet with in God's ways; but they do not cast in their thoughts what the troubles are like to be that they shall find in them. VI. THAT IT IS THE CHOICEINESS OF A MAN'S SPIRIT THAT CAUSES HIM TO FOLLOW GOD FULLY. 1. We shall show what there is in this spirit that doth carry on a man fully. (1) By this a man comes to have a more full presence of God with him. (2) The choiceiness of a man's spirit raiseth it to converse with high things, and so carries it above the snares and hindrances that are below; and being above these, it goes on freely and fully in its course, and is not in that danger of miscarrying as other poor spirits are who converse so much with the things upon the earth; as birds that fly high are not caught by the fowler, they are not taken by his lime-twigs, by his net or pit-fall, so as others are who are much below upon the ground (Prov. xxv. 24). (3) The choiceiness of a man's spirit changeth his end, and so carries him on fully after the Lord; for when the end is changed all is changed. (4) This choiceiness of spirit causeth a suitableness, a sympathy between the frame of the heart and the ways of holiness. (5) This choiceiness of spirit causeth a man to look to his duty and not to regard what may follow. (6) The choiceiness of a man's spirit causes a man that if he doth look at any consequences that may follow upon his way, he looks only at the last issue of all. Will it then be peace? shall I then be glad of these ways I now walk in? (7) The choiceiness of a man's spirit strengthens it against the impressions that sensitive objects use to leave upon soft and weak spirits. 2. Thus you see what there is in this choice spirit that carries it on fully after the Lord. Now there must of necessity be this, or else this full following of the Lord will never be; nothing else will do it. And that—(1) Because the ways of God are supernatural, and therefore there must be something in the spirit of a man which is supernatural that must reach to them; this which is supernatural in the spirits of godly men we see it in the effects, and we know it is above reason and all natural principles whatsoever. (2) The ways of God are not only above nature but contrary to nature, and therefore there must needs be some special choiceiness of spirit to carry a man on in them. In following after the Lord, all natural abilities and common grace will do no more but stop the stream of corrupt nature; they cannot so overpower it as to carry the soul another way; but the work of grace in this choiceiness of spirit will do it. (3) The stream of times and examples of men are exceeding strong, and it is not a little matter that will carry on the soul against them. (4) There are so many strong alluring temptations, wherein the wiles of Satan are very powerful to draw the heart away from God, that except there be some special work of God's grace to give wisdom to discern the deceits of sin and to discern the danger of them, the soul most certainly could never hold on in the way of its following after the Lord. (5) There are so many troubles, oppositions, that it meets withal in this way, that most certainly would drive it out were it not for some choice work of God's grace in it; but this choiceiness of spirit will carry a man through all them. (6) There are so many scandals and reproaches that rise against the ways of God, that if a man hath not more than an ordinary spirit he most certainly will be offended. (7) Yea, God many times hides Himself from His servants, while they are following after Him, and this oftentimes proves the sorest temptation of all, and a greater discouragement than all the rest. It must needs be something extraordi-

nary that preserves a spark in the midst of waves, that preserves a candlelight in the midst of storms and tempests. Use 1: Never wonder then, or be offended, to see so many to fall off from God; few men have choice spirits. Use 2: Hence the world is mistaken, who judge it stubbornness of spirit in God's servants that will go on in the ways of godliness; they are a kind of inflexible people. No, it is no stubbornness, it is the choiceness of their spirits; you judge it stubbornness because you do not know the principles upon which they go. Use 3: Let those who have this choice spirit encourage themselves in this, that surely it will enable them to follow God fully; let them know—(1) That though they be weak, if their spirits be right, if of the right kind, they shall certainly hold out. (2) Therefore is Christ filled with all fulness of all grace, that out of His fulness thou mayst receive grace for grace. Use 4: If it be this choiceness of spirit that is the only thing that will fully carry after the Lord, then let us learn to look to our spirits: "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it come the issues of life." But wherein should we look to our spirits? (1) Take heed to your judgments; keep your judgments clear for God and His truth, as it is said (Isa. xxxiii. 6). (2) Labour to keep conscience clear, take heed of pollution there, take heed of a breach in thy spirit there, for that will weaken it much. (3) Labour to keep thy heart low and humble; when the flesh swells it cannot bear any hard thing upon it; though a member grows bigger when it swells yet it grows weaker; so it is with the soul. (4) Labour to keep the spirit heavenly; mixture of dross will weaken it. (5) Labour to keep thy spirit in a continual trembling frame, abiding in the fear of the Lord all the day long. (*Ibid.*) *Following fully*:—To follow God fully demands—1. Sincerity. 2. Cheerfulness. 3. Heroism. Many temptations and obstacles to be overcome. 4. Entireness. No compromise. 5. Study. We cannot follow without imitating. Use cannot imitate without knowing the character. (*Homilist.*) *Christian heroism*:—I. TRUE CHRISTIAN HEROISM AIMS AT GREAT THINGS. II. TRUE SPIRITUAL HEROISM ENDURES GREAT TRIALS IN THE PERFORMANCE AND ACHIEVEMENT OF ITS GREAT ENDS. III. TO ALL SUCH HEROISM FAITH IS ESSENTIAL. IV. TRUE HEROISM IS UNDER THE INSPIRATION AND POWER OF GREAT MOTIVES. (*T. Archer, D.D.*) *Faithfulness towards God exemplified and rewarded*:—I. THAT THE HONEST SERVANTS OF JESUS CHRIST MUST DISTINGUISH THEMSELVES FROM OTHERS BY FOLLOWING THE LORD FULLY. 1. What it is to follow the Lord fully. (1) It is to follow the Lord only as our great Guide and Leader (Heb. xii. 2). (2) To follow the Lord fully is to follow Him universally (Psa. cxix. 6). (3) To follow the Lord fully is to follow Him uprightly. A hypocrite does but walk in a vain show. His feet only, not his heart, do follow the Lord. (4) Finally, it is to follow the Lord resolutely, as Ruth did Naomi, in opposition to all discouragements and impediments in the way. There is the river of evil example of the world, but they must strive against the stream; there are corrupt strong lusts of the heart, but they must cut off right hands and pluck out right eyes; and there is the cross that will be laid on their backs, which they must go through with. They must not be as those who go to sea for pleasure, but like hardy mariners who ride out the storm. 2. We now proceed to give the reasons of the point. (1) Because the change made in regeneration is a real change though not perfect. Believers are God's "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." The new creature, from the time of its birth, is perfect in its parts though not in degrees. (2) In closing with Christ there is an universal resignation. They give themselves up wholly to the Lord. (3) The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth (Eph. v. 9). When there is not something of all goodness, there the Spirit dwelleth not. II. THAT THEY WHO WOULD FOLLOW THE LORD FULLY MUST HAVE ANOTHER SPIRIT, ANOTHER THAN THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD, ANOTHER THAN THEIR OWN SPIRIT NATURALLY IS. 1. A noble elevated spirit, aiming at high things, and is not satisfied with these with which the common herd of mankind are satisfied. Thus Caleb aimed at Canaan (chap. xiii. 30), while the rest were for Egypt again (chap. xiv. 4). Such another spirit have the saints (Phil. iii. 14). 2. A spirit of faith (2 Cor. iv. 13). 3. A spirit of holy courage and resolution (chap. xiv. 9). III. THAT THOSE WHO, BY FOLLOWING THE LORD FULLY IN THE TIME OF GENERAL DECLINING, DISTINGUISH THEMSELVES, GOD WILL DISTINGUISH THEM FROM OTHERS BY SPECIAL MARKS OF FAVOUR IN THE TIME OF GENERAL CALAMITY. We are then—1. To show how those must distinguish themselves from others in the time of general declining, who would have the Lord to distinguish them from others in time of general calamity. Here we observe—(1) That they must be best when others are worst (Gen. vi. 9). (2) That they must cleave to God, especially in that article in which others are leaving Him, as in Caleb's case:

they must be careful that they be not led away with the sins of the time, that they do not enter into the general conspiracy of the generation against the Lord and His way, whether it be against truth or holiness. (3) That they must witness against every declining, according to their stations, and as they have access, for the exoneration of their own consciences and the honour of God. (4) That they must be mourners over the sins of others, lamenting them before the Lord; sighing for all the abominations which are done in the midst of the land (Ezek. ix. 4). Let us now—2. Point out the marks of favour by which, in times of general calamity, God useth to distinguish such. There is—(1) Liberal furniture for duty, in a large communication of the Spirit, when the Spirit is withdrawn from others (Matt. x. 19). (2) Intimation of His special love to their souls. Thus had Caleb in the text, the saints of God have often golden days in the dregs of time upon this account. (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *Of following the Lord fully* :—I. WHAT we are to understand by “following the Lord fully.” 1. That we acknowledge no other Lord besides Him. 2. That we obey Him without reserve. 3. That we follow Him openly. 4. That we cleave to Him steadfastly when others forsake Him, and when exposed by His service to the world’s hatred. II. Press the duty by some MOTIVES AND ARGUMENTS. 1. If we would be honest men and Christians indeed, we must “follow the Lord fully.” So that it is for our own honour. 2. It is necessary to secure inward peace. 3. Our Lord has in some respects entrusted us with His glory. 4. The love of our neighbour is another motive. 5. Those who “follow the Lord fully” shall possess the good land of promise, of which Canaan was only a type. (*T. Harnham.*) *The thorough Christian* :—To follow Christ “fully” means resolute, unflinching obedience to all of Christ’s commandments. It is the carrying out of religion to the utmost detail of Christian duty. Such a Christian never asks to commute with his Divine Master as to hard work; he never strikes for an eight hours’ system of labour or higher wages. He is not all the time coming up before that bleeding, self-sacrificing Saviour and whimpering, “Master, I pray thee, have me excused.” He never interprets the Bible in a latitudinarian sense, never reads it in a lax, ultra-liberal light; and if there is a right side to be found to the ethical questions of the hour, his first question is, “What is right? What will please Jesus?” He aims to be thorough in small things, and he loves the wholesome severities of duty. Now, there is a religion nowadays that runs very rapidly on the down grades, and goes fast on the descending grades, but it never climbs. Commend me to the loyal, uncompromising, sturdy Christian that bears a pain, a pinch, or a penalty; a scowl or a scoff; a religion that can afford to get rich, and yet can be humble; that can afford to go into high society, and yet carry Christ there; to a religion that “follows the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.” In our day the test is not to go to Smithfield. Our trial is to follow Christ in the warm, relaxing atmosphere of quiet and external prosperity, and not to be enervated thereby. It is very easy to be a Christian sometimes; or rather, for a Christian to be very warm and glowing sometimes. For instance, when a prayer-meeting is crowded with fervent hearts, and the atmosphere is alive with enthusiasm, how easy is it then to catch fire, and to glow, and to sing and pray. It was very easy for Caleb to exercise faith when he was in the valley of Eshcol picking grapes; but to keep up his faith in face of the contagious cowardice and treason of the camp, that was another thing. To hold out with his faith during forty long and wearisome years of marching, that demanded and developed the most resolute principle of his God-loving heart. To serve God faithfully in an irreligious family, or in a counting-house or shop where two-thirds of them are scoffers, and in polite fashionable life, to serve Christ there proves the mettle of your religion. It is one thing to follow Christ when everything helps you; it is quite another thing to follow Christ when everything hinders you. And to follow Christ fully means to keep following Him in every place, and under every circumstance, against the current. I remember when treason first broke out in my own beloved country, it went through our army and navy, and sifted it. We soon found out who would follow the old flag of freedom to the death, and who would desert it. I could point to a Christian merchant who gives so largely and liberally that the amounts seem almost incredible, and I happen to know that that man begins his every day with an hour with Jesus, on his knees, and reading his Bible; he breaks away from his business at noon for the noon-day prayer-meeting. Such a man as that follows Christ fully, and yet he might excuse himself by the very vastness of his traffic and the pressing nature of his immense business. Now when I find such a man here and there in our churches, I feel that each one of these is a Caleb to stir and stimulate others to

imitation. Sometime ago, when in a mine, looking through its dark corridors, I every now and then saw the glimmer of a moving lamp, and I could track it all through the mine. The reason was that the miner carried it on his hat—it was a part of himself, and it showed where he went. I said, would that in this dark world every miner of the Master carried his lamp to show where he walks. Such people are Christians everywhere—before their own children, at their own fireside, and in their own homes. In their commercial transactions they buy and sell by the golden rule, and measure their goods with a Christian yardstick. Wherever they can honour God, or set a pure example, and save a sinner by living out Christ, they are ready to do it. In short, they follow Christ fully, and heartily, and faithfully, looking to the inheritance of the reward. And the reason of this is the same reason that Caleb had: for we are told that Caleb had “another spirit.” Theirs is another spirit from the worldling, and another spirit from the gold hunter, the devotee of fashion, the carnally-minded. Their spirit is from above, the fruit of conversion; it is the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Loving Christ, they love to follow Him; fearing God rather than man, they so live as to please God, who trieth the heart. (*T. L. Cuyler, D.D.*) *Christian thoroughness*:—What we want is not to look Christians, or to pretend Christians, or to profess Christians, but to be Christians. You need not then so carefully guard yourself; you need not be on the ceaseless watch what you do. Take an anagram, read it from the right or from the left, or from the top or from the bottom, it reads the same thing. Take a Christian, look at him at one angle, or look at another angle; look at him in any light or in any direction, and he is a Christian still. The great secret of getting rid of a vast amount of trouble and inconvenience is being a Christian; and when you are a Christian your eye will be single, your body will be full of light, and all influences sanctified and blessed by the Holy Spirit of God, will be sanctifying and will bless all that are connected with you. *Difficult ministry the reward of thorough service*:—When the Spartan king advanced against the enemy he had always some one with him that had been crowned in the public games of Greece. And they tell us that a Lacedæmonian, when large sums were offered him on condition that he would not enter the Olympic lists, refused. Having with much difficulty thrown his antagonist in wrestling, one put this question to him, “Spartan, what will you get by this victory?” He answered with a smile, “I shall have the honour to fight foremost in the ranks of my prince.” The honour which appertains to office in the Church of God lies mainly in this—that the man who is set apart for such service has the privilege of being first in holiness of example, abundance of liberality, patience of long-suffering, zeal in effort and self-sacrifice in service. Thou gracious King of kings, if Thou hast made me a minister in Thy Church, enable me to be foremost in every good word and work, shunning no sacrifice and shrinking from no suffering. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 25. The wilderness by the way of the Red Sea.—*The rule of the road*:—Every traveller has heard of the “rule of the road,” which must be obeyed in order to avoid accidents. There are certain rules of the road also to be observed by the pilgrim band on our journey to the Eternal City. 1. First of all, there is only one road for Christ’s people to walk in. Walk in the old path, the King’s highway, the way of God’s commandments. And this road of ours is by the way of the Red Sea—the Red Sea of Christ’s most precious blood! We must always keep in sight of that. 2. Here is another rule of the road; do the duty which is nearest to you. There is an old English parsonage somewhere by the sea which has this sentence carved over its porch, “Do the next thing.” Let it be our motto. Some of us do nothing, because we do not know where to begin; we are thinking of next week, when to-day’s duty stands before us. Each day brings its own work; let us try to do it faithfully, prayerfully, cheerfully, trustingly, and then we may be sure we are going forward in the right way. 3. Another rule of the road is: be brave, “only be strong and very courageous.” Be brave enough to do what is right, no matter at what cost. The world will laugh at you, sneer at you, misjudge you. “Trust in God and do the right.” 4. Here is another rule of the road: be neighbourly. Never forget that you belong to one family, one army on the march—the Holy Catholic Church. Naturalists tell us that the pine tree is one of the most inhospitable, just as the oak is the most kindly, of trees. Beneath the shadow of the pine tree all is bare and desolate. No primrose opens its bright eyes there, no wild rose clings, no woodbine blossoms. There are some people like the inhospitable pine tree, they live only for themselves, and never offer help, or comfort, or shelter to

another. Let us try by God's grace to make our path of life bright for others, not sad and desolate, like the pine wood. 5. Yet another rule of the road: keep in the sunshine. On the journey through life there is always a sunny side for the Christian. A certain king once asked a famous general if he had seen the eclipse of the sun, and the Duke of Alva answered that he had too much to do on earth to have time to look up to heaven. Ah! if any of us are melancholy, discontented, it is because we are looking too much at the earth, and not lifting up our eyes to heaven. I say to you, come out of the gloom of your own thoughts into the sunshine, and thank God—"Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." 6. One last rule of the road now: remember the road leads home. In all earthly journeys, however long and tiring, this thought always strengthens the traveller—I shall soon be home. Home, even an earthly home, is the central spot of every man's life. (*H. J. Wilmot-Buxton, M.A.*)

Vers. 26-29. **I have heard the murmurings.**—*Base murmuring*:—Murmuring is not a simple sin, but involves—1. Presumption. 2. Ingratitude. 3. Rebellion. I. MURMURING WITHOUT ANY CAUSE. II. MURMURING AGAINST THE BEST BEING. 1. Think who and what He is—the Supremely Wise and Good, &c. 2. Think of what He had done for the Israelites, and what He has done for us—redeemed, guarded, sustained, &c. 3. Think of what He had promised to them, and what He has promised to us. How base to murmur against our great Benefactor! III. MURMURING OF LONG CONTINUANCE. There are many to-day who are habitual grumblers; murmuring is not occasional. How great is their sin! how great, also, is the patience of God with them! IV. MURMURINGS KNOWN TO GOD. God hears every bitter complaint; He perceives every unthankful and rebellious mood. V. MURMURING PUNISHED BY GOD. These Israelite murmurers were excluded from the Promised Land. The murmurer excludes himself from the Canaan of joy, and peace, and contentment. Murmuring is a self-punishing sin. God has made it so. (*W. Jones.*) **Your carcases shall fall in this wilderness.**—*The sentence of God upon the sinful people*:—I. THE SENTENCE WAS CONSPICUOUSLY JUST. Its justice is manifest. 1. In the correspondence between the nature of the sin and the nature of the punishment. 2. In the correspondence between the duration of the unbelieving exploration and the duration of the punishment. 3. In the correspondence between the different degrees of guilt and the different severities of punishment. II. THE SENTENCE WAS UTTERLY IRREVERSIBLE. III. THE SENTENCE CAUSED GREAT SORROW. 1. Their sorrow had a real and sufficient cause. 2. Their sorrow was not that of repentance, but of selfishness. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 31. **Your little ones. . . will I bring in.**—*The duty of parents to their children*:—I. I propose to extract from our text some PERMANENT AND ROOT PRINCIPLES WITH RESPECT TO THE RELATIONS BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN, THAT GOD WOULD HAVE US PAY SPECIAL HEED TO; and then from these root principles I shall endeavour to draw a few PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS for our conduct with our children at home. 1. Our first thought is—how completely Almighty God recognises the sense of preciousness which all parents with a spark of heart in them attach to their children, their little children especially; and how God turns the instinct of affection in parents to their children to the parents' condemnation, if they will not use their affection in the direction of securing eternal life for those whom they love. 2. That children in the providence of God, and according to the rules of God's government, do, in a certain degree, share their parents' privileges, suffer their parents' penalties, nay, even sin with their parents' sin. 3. That although, in a certain degree, the children share the privileges, the penalty, and the sin of their parents, yet there is mercy, ay, and there is justice also. 4. That the great cause why the children of Israel refused to go up to the land of Canaan was a want of faith. So the great reason why so-called Christian parents do not take the trouble to prepare their children for eternity is that their own personal belief about the things of eternity is not as strong as it ought to be. II. Now let me put THESE PRINCIPLES INTO A PRACTICAL SHAPE FOR OUR INSTRUCTION. What is the way in which our great God and Father, who has put us into the responsible and blessed position of parents towards children whom we love, would have us fulfil that responsibility? First of all, He would have us fulfil it in careful, and exact, and regular instruction concerning the things of God. Do not be content to leave this duty to others, but ascertain for yourselves what your children are actually learning

about their Lord and Saviour, how far they feel it and know it. And then about example. It is a very good thing to teach your children out of the Word of God; but it is as good to teach them in your own daily life and conversation. There is one thing more—prayer. (*Bp. Thorold.*)

Vers. 33, 34. **Each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities.—God often punishes sin proportionably :**—God oftentimes punisheth in proportion, so that the judgment is answerable to the sin. Of what kind the sin is, of the same kind is the punishment (Gen. xlii. 21). God sent upon Sodom a punishment like to the nature of their sin; they burned in unclean and unnatural lust one toward another, and the Lord sent fire from heaven to burn them up. 1. God hath many ways to punish sin, yet it pleaseth Him to send His punishments according to our sins, thereby to strike us with inward remorse and to work a deeper impression in the conscience. For when He punisheth after this manner rather than after any other, the judgment itself doth more effectually force the sufferer to acknowledge God's justice in plaguing of Him in that sort. 2. This maketh men not only to justify God, whose judgments are always just, but maketh them also to judge themselves, and thereby they oftentimes prevent the more heavy judgments of God. 3. God hath given a law, and by the law He requireth a proportionable punishment for sin (Lev. xxiv. 19). This course will the Lord take (who is the supreme Magistrate) so often as it pleaseth Him, albeit He do not tie Himself to that law. Uses: 1. This serveth to warrant us that we may lawfully expect judgment from God in proportion upon men for their sins. For the which hath been, may be; and that which the Lord hath done, He will certainly do it again, so that we may promise and persuade ourselves that they shall in the end be paid home to the full, with due proportion of punishment according to their sins. 2. Whensoever we remain under any judgment of God's hand, let us labour for spiritual wisdom, that we may discern what the sin is which is the cause thereof. For by the manner of the judgment we may oftentimes find out the manner of our sin. This way we shall make the punishment profitable unto us, if we take it and lay it unto the sin, as it were a salve upon the sore. It will work in us a care to "judge ourselves, that we be not judged of the Lord" (1 Cor. xi. 31, 32). 3. As God dealeth with men in regard to their sins, so He dealeth oftentimes with His children in good things and for good things. He will reward according to our deeds, blessing with the same blessing, and mercy with the same mercy (2 Tim. i. 18). (*W. Attersoll.*)

Vers. 40-45. **But they presumed to go up.—A presumptuous enterprise and its disastrous termination :**—In these verses we have an illustration of—1. The sad perversity of sinful human nature. 2. The confession of sin, and persistence in sin. 3. The great difficulty of walking humbly and patiently in the path which our sin has rendered necessary for us. I. THE PRESUMPTUOUS ENTERPRISE. 1. In opposition to the command of the Lord. 2. Despite the remonstrance of Moses. 3. Without the symbol of the Divine Presence and the presence of the Divinely-appointed leader. II. THE DISASTROUS TERMINATION OF THIS PRESUMPTUOUS ENTERPRISE. 1. Disgraceful defeat. 2. Sore slaughter. 3. Bitter sorrow. Conclusion—From the whole let us learn the sin and the folly of entering upon any enterprises, and especially difficult ones, in our own strength. "Apart from Me," said Christ, "ye can do nothing." This is applicable to—1. Spiritual life in its origin and progress. The attempt in our own strength to lead a religious, godly life, is sure to end in sad disappointment and utter failure. 2. Spiritual conflict. Unless we take to ourselves "the whole armour of God," our spiritual foes will be too many and too mighty for us. We can conquer only through Christ. 3. Spiritual service. Our efforts to benefit our fellow-men will succeed only as they are made in reliance upon the blessing of God. We can bless others only as He blesses us (comp. 1 Cor. iii. 5-7). (*W. Jones.*) **Unauthorised enterprises :**—The man who forsakes God's commandments forsakes his own happiness. 1. The importance of improving present opportunities. You have a throne of grace to go to; go there to-day, lest by delay your anxiety, though earnest, should be as unavailing as was that of Israel to go to Canaan, and you are compelled to say with the prophet (Jer. viii. 20). 2. The necessity of God's blessing on all our undertakings. We do not say that man, without God's blessing, never gets what he wants; he often does, but not what is good for him; all things work together for good only to those who have this blessing. And further, those undertakings which, with the Divine blessing, are easy, without it are impossible. 3. The connection which subsists between

transgression and sorrow. Sorrow is of two kinds; first, godly sorrow, which worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of—such was that of Peter; and, secondly, the sorrow of unavailing regret, when the day of recovery has passed away. It was this unavailing sorrow that Israel felt when the Lord said, “Thou shalt not enter into My rest.” In a spirit of rebellion they resolve, “We will go up”; but they went without the Lord, and they were driven back. 4. The danger that results from an unbelieving heart! 5. We see from this passage the holiness of that God with whom we have to do. While every provision is made for the returning penitent, the impenitent transgressor will certainly be destroyed. God never tolerates sin; no, not even in His own people. 6. Finally, we should learn from this subject our need of special sanctifying grace; for no outward advantages can secure personal holiness. (*George Breay, B.A.*) *Religious explanation of failure*:—“Because ye are turned away from the Lord, therefore the Lord will not be with you.” Even that is a word of comfort. The comfort is not far to fetch, even from the desert of this stern fact. The comfort is found in the fact that the Lord will be with those who have not turned away from Him. The law operates in two opposite ways. Law is love, when rightly seized and applied; and love is law, having all the pillars of its security and all the dignity of its righteousness to support it in all the transitions of its experience. The reason why we fail is that God has gone from us. Putting the case so, we put it wrongly. God has not gone from us; we have gone from God. The Church is nothing without its godliness; it is less than nothing: it is not only the negation of strength, it is the utter and most helpless weakness. Israel was the Church in the wilderness, and Israel was nothing without its God. The number might be six hundred thousand fighting men, and they would go down like a dry wooden fence before a raging fire, if the Lord was not in the midst. They were not men without Him. The Church lives, moves, and has its being in God—not in some high or deep metaphysical sense only, but in the plain and obvious sense of the terms: that it has no being or existence outside God. When it forgets to pray, it loses the art of war; when the Church forgets to put on the beautiful garments of holiness, though it be made up of a thousand Samsons, it cannot strike one fatal blow at the enemy. Count the Church by the volume of its prayer; register the strength of the Church by the purity and completeness of its consecration. If you number the Church in millions, and tell not what it is at the altar and at the cross, you have returned the census of a cemetery, not the statistics of a living, mighty, invincible host. Genius is nothing, learning is nothing, organisation is a sarcasm and an irony—apart from that which gives every one of them value and force—the praying heart, the trustful spirit. The Church conquers by holiness. (*J. Parker, D.D.*)

CHAPTER XV.

VER. 25. Sin-offering . . . for their ignorance.—*Pardon of unknown sins through Christ*:—1. Because of our ignorance we are not fully aware of our sins of ignorance. Yet they are many, in the form both of commission and omission. We may be doing in all sincerity, as a service to God, that which He has not commanded and can never accept. 2. The Lord knows these sins of ignorance every one. This may well alarm us, since in justice He will require these trespasses at our hand; but, again, faith spies comfort in this fact, for the Lord will see to it that stains unseen by us shall yet be washed away. He sees the sin that He may cease to see it by casting it behind His back. 3. Our great comfort is that Jesus, the true Priest, has made atonement for all the congregation of Israel. That atonement secures the pardon of unknown sins. His precious blood cleanses us from all sin. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 30, 31. The soul that doeth aught presumptuously.—*The definition and danger of presumptuous sins*:—I. THE DEFINITION. We take, first, the case of an individual who sins against the positive remonstrances of his conscience; and we say that he sins presumptuously. We have all, at one time or another, withstood the clearest and most decisive suggestions of conscience. We have all proved the power of inclination, when it has come up in a pleasing shape, to bear down a con-

sciousness of what is right, whether by an invention of some ingenious subterfuge, or by some weapons of unblushing hardihood. We could give no better definition of conscience than that it is evidently the vicegerent of Deity. And what then is presumption? Where shall it be found, if we describe not as presumptuous the conduct of the man who walks one way whilst the voice of the internal monitor summons him to walk another? Let us advance to other instances. The guilt of a sin is in a great degree to be estimated by the strength of the temptation which solicits its performance. But if you take the generality of men, you will find they scarcely need any temptation at all to induce them to sin. They may be said to give the devil no trouble, but to strike their colours without firing a shot: a breath of air will make them swerve from allegiance. There must be presumption, and that too of an enormity not easily measured, in conduct which is marked on one side with such contempt of God that men will obey His despisers even without strong inducement; and on the other, such neglect of the soul, that they surrender it without requiring anything in exchange. Now let us glance at the third sort of presumptuous sins. If I wantonly expose myself to temptation, then, though I may afterwards struggle hard before I yield, I shall sin presumptuously. It were better to see Christians—especially young ones—so distrustful of themselves that they might pass for timid, than so overweening of their own strength as to thrust themselves into danger. Take a still more general case—where a man goes on sinning, calculating either that it will be time enough by and by to repent, or that God will prove at last too merciful to execute His threatenings—most assuredly that man sins presumptuously. If he reckon on uncovenanted mercies, what is this but presumption? II. BUT WHEREIN, YOU WILL NOW ASK, LIES THE PECULIAR GUILT AND DANGER OF PRESUMPTUOUS SINS? Why should David pray so earnestly to be kept from them? Why should our text be so emphatic in its condemnation? We will just take in succession several cases of presumptuous sins, and endeavour to answer the question in each. If, in the first place, it be sinning presumptuously to sin against conscience and conviction, there must be special guilt when a man does a thing in spite of the warnings of the delegate of God; he strips himself of every excuse of ignorance or inadvertence; and hence a special guilt. But conscience also will grow less sensitive, in proportion as it be less heeded. If, again, it be sinning presumptuously to sin on slight temptation, surely there must be peculiar guilt, inasmuch as there must be a readiness, nay, even an eagerness, to fail in spiritual matters. He is indeed guilty who is flung in wrestling with a giant, forasmuch as God is ready to give strength in proportion to the opponent; but what shall we say of him who is flung in wrestling with a dwarf? Then is there not peculiar danger and peculiar guilt in sinning on slight temptation, inasmuch as a man grows confirmed in habits of sin? For the moment sin becomes habitual, the breaking loose from it becomes miraculous. If you take our third class of presumptuous sins—sins, the result of temptation that we have ourselves sought, or at least not avoided, who sees not the guilt, who perceives not the danger? Christ would not throw Himself from the pinnacle of the temple, because it was unlawful to tempt the Lord. Yet we do that from which the Mediator indignantly recoiled, when we enter into scenes, or mingle with companies which we know likely to minister incentives to passions, or oppose hindrances to piety. Such is the guilt: and the danger is that of growing familiar with vice after having been vanquished by it. Mixed with the world, let the world once seduce you, and the world will appear to you not half so formidable as before, and not half so pernicious. Thus sinning presumptuously, through presumptuously exposing yourselves, you will be more and more inclined to continue the exposure, and the presumption, as it were, will propagate itself; and your danger will be that of growing apathy: issuing, at last, in total apostasy. Again, there is one other class. If I continue sinning in the vain hope that there will be time hereafter for repentance, or because I calculate that God will be too merciful to punish, I incur a special guilt, inasmuch as I trifle with the Almighty, or mock the Almighty; and I run a special risk as I deal with possibilities as though they were certainties, or stake on a minute chance the results of a long hereafter. So that, surveying successively the several descriptions of presumptuous sins, we bring out in each case the same result; and we are forced to pronounce that he who sins presumptuously—whether the presumption consist in withstanding conscience, or in yielding to slight temptation, or in seeking peril, or in reckoning on future repentance or future mercy—he who sins presumptuously, deserves, and may expect to have it said of him, “The soul that reproacheth the Lord, shall be cut off from among His people.” (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Presump-*

tion.—I. WHAT PRESUMPTION INCLUDES. It signifies—1. Boldness in evil. Sinning without fear. Hardihood, recklessness. 2. Arrogance in evil. Setting ourselves up against God. Pride of heart and spirit and tongue (Psa. lxxiii. 6, ix. 2; Acts ii. 18). 3. Irreverence towards God. All profanity. As in the case of Pharaoh, "Who is the Lord?" &c. 4. Confidence of escape from the threatenings of God. Not dreading nor caring for consequences, &c. II. THE CHIEF CAUSES OF PRESUMPTION. 1. Spiritual ignorance. Ignorance of self and God. It is the offspring of darkness. 2. Recklessness and inconsideration. 3. Confirmed unbelief, giving no credit to the Word. 4. Hardness of heart. This is both a cause and a result. III. THE TERRIBLE RESULTS OF PRESUMPTUOUSNESS. 1. God, defied, will vindicate His authority. He cannot let it pass. His majesty and law concerned, &c. 2. Threatening despised, He will terribly execute. Not one jot fail. There may be delay, long suffering, but the execution of vengeance is certain. 3. Mercy despised will involve in fearful retribution. Hear God (Prov. i. 24; Psa. ii. 4, &c.). The instances of this, how numerous. The old world, Pharaoh, Sodom, &c., nations of Canaan, Jerusalem (see Luke xix. 41-44). Application.—1. How needful is consideration. 2. Repentance, how imperative. 3. To seek mercy. The gospel publishes it in Christ, and offers it to every sinner. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *Sins dangerous and deadly*.—I. THAT THERE ARE DEGREES IN SIN. People sometimes say, as an excuse for their sin, that as they have gone wrong they might as well suffer for much as for little. No! it is false. With every sin the man gets worse; sinfulness increases. Sins of ignorance through trifling may grow to be those of presumption. II. THAT WHILE ALL SINS ARE DANGEROUS, SOME ARE DEADLY. The text shows that all sin is dangerous by the fact that an atonement had to be made for sins of ignorance; none could be forgiven without. While ignorance may excuse, nothing can justify any sin. 1. That God is merciful. He sent His Son to die that He might put away sin, and restore us unto Himself. 2. That there is a limit to His mercy. What cost Him so much He will let no one despise. (*D. Lloyd.*) *Progress of presumption*.—Presumption never stops in its first attempt. If Cæsar comes once to pass the Rubicon, he will be sure to march farther on, even till he enters the very bowels of Rome, and break open the Capitol itself. He that wades so far as to wet and foul himself, cares not how much he trashes farther. (*R. South, D.D.*) *Presumption punished*.—A young man who had inherited an estate from an uncle was exhorted to seek Christ, and said that he would do so as soon as he had paid off the debts which encumbered the estate. "Young man," said the pastor, "beware: you may never see that day: whilst you are gaining the world you may lose your soul." The young heir said, "I'll run the risk." He went into the woods and was engaged in felling a tree, when a falling limb caused his instant death within a few hours of his bold presumption.

Vers. 32-36. A man that gathered sticks upon the Sabbath.—*Gathering sticks on the Sabbath*.—An Oriental legend tells us that, while Solomon was once on his way to visit the Queen of Sheba, he came to a valley in which dwelt a peculiar tribe of monkeys. Upon asking about their history, he was informed that they were the descendants of a colony of Jews, who settling in that region years before, had, by habitual neglect of the Sabbath, gradually degenerated to the condition of brutes. The story is, of course, a mere fable, but the moral is worth remembering. The ceremonial part of the Sabbath is done away, so that greater liberty is allowed to us than was given to the Jews. Works of necessity and mercy take precedence even of the regularly appointed duties of the day (Hos. vi. 6). The moral part is, however, as strongly in force as ever. To have the mind exercised on spiritual subjects, and occupied in advancing the interests of our souls, is an imperative duty. To be guilty of a wilful profanation of the Lord's day is—I. AN UNREASONABLE SIN. A young man, well off in the world, and an elderly man of business, were riding in a railway carriage together, between London and a country town, when the question of Sunday amusements came up. "I maintain that Sunday ought to be a general holiday," said the younger, in a tone which betokened assurance and presumption, "and the people ought not to be kept out of such places as the Zoological Gardens and the Crystal Palace grounds. I would have Sunday used for recreation." "Recreation!" answered the elder, gravely, "yes, that is the very word. The Sabbath is meant for recreation, and if people were recreated, they would want very little of the so-called recreation which they now make so much of." The conversation on that subject dropped. II. A PRESUMPTUOUS SIN. The man who was so signally punished, for merely gathering a few sticks on the

Sabbath, might have argued that he could only be charged with a very small breach of the Divine law, and that the bundle of faggots was really necessary for his comfort. Such flimsy excuses would be of no avail. His conduct was a decided act of rebellion against God, and he was, in fact, accusing Him with being a hard master, who did not deserve to be obeyed. Those who believe in taking God at His word, cannot doubt that any wilful neglect of His commandments is always followed, sooner or later, by loss! A thrifty merchant remarked to his physician, "Had it not been for the rest which I have enjoyed on the Lord's Day, I should long ago have been a maniac!" Many are the instances of those who have dug their own graves, because they had no Sundays. (*J. N. Norton, D.D.*) *Obedience tested in the little*:—This incident has often been quoted as an instance of extreme and intolerable severity, and has been cited against those whose reading of the Scriptures leads them to propose to keep the Sabbath day. The mocker has found quite a little treasure here. The poor man was gathering sticks on the Sabbath day, and he had to forfeit his life for the violation of the law. Had the text read—And a certain man was found in the wilderness openly blaspheming God, and he was stoned to death—we should have had some sense of rest and harmony in the mind: the balance would seem to be complete. But that is the very sophism that is ruining us. We do not see the reality of the case. We think of huge sins; there are none. We think of little sins; there are none. It is the spot that is ruin; it is the one little thing that spoils the universe. Obedience can only be tested by so-called little things. Where one man is called to be a hero on some great scale, ten thousand men are called to be courteous, gentle, patient; where one has the opportunity of being great on the battle-field of a death-bed, all have opportunity of being good in hopefulness, charity, forgiveness, and every grace that belongs to the Cross of Christ; where one has the opportunity of joining a great procession, ten thousand have the opportunity of assisting the aged, helping the blind, speaking a word for the speechless, and putting a donation into the hand of honest poverty. Let us realise the truth of the doctrine that we are not called upon to display our obedience upon a gigantic scale within the theatre of the universe and under the observation of angels—but to go out into the field and work with bent back and willing hands and glad hearts, doing life's simple duty under Heaven's inspiration and encouragement. The man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath day might have been quite a great man on festival occasions when all Israel had to be dressed in its best; he might have been one of the foremost of the show. You discover what men are by their secret deeds, by what they do when they suppose nobody is looking, by what they are about when they are suddenly pounced upon. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The Sabbath-breaker and his doom*:—I. THE SIN. 1. The transgression of a moral law, which was enforced by the most solemn commands and by the severest penalty. 2. The transgression of this law wilfully. II. THE ARREST. The offender was seized in the act of transgression, and taken before the judicial authorities. III. THE CONSULTATION. The direction of the Lord is sought as to the mode by which the sentence of death is to be executed upon him. IV. THE SENTENCE. This was determined by the Lord. The transgressor must be put to death (Exod. xxxi. 14, 15); he must be put to death by stoning (ver. 35). V. THE EXECUTION. "And all the congregation brought him without," &c. (ver. 36). The people were the executioners. This would increase the force of the warning which the event gave to the nation. Conclusion: 1. The moral element in the law of the Sabbath is of perpetual obligation. We still rest for body and mind; we still need worship for the spirit. 2. The neglecters of religious duties and privileges will do well to take warning. If any man fails to observe religiously the Lord's day, he does so at his own loss and peril. (*W. Jones.*) *Punishment of Sabbath-breaking*:—1. The perpetration of one particular presumptuous sin, together with its circumstances, as what, where, when, and how. The fact was seemingly but a small matter, namely, gathering a few sticks, &c., and possibly he might pretend some necessity or expediency to himself thereby, &c., but because really it was done with an high hand, in contempt of God and His law, and a profaning of His holy Sabbath. 2. The punishment for this perpetrated fact of profaning the Sabbath, wherein—(1) The sinner is apprehended. (2) Accused. (3) Imprisoned, because it was not yet known what sentence to pass upon him. For though the matter of the fact was twice doomed with death (Exod. xxxi. 14; xxxv. 2), yet was it not declared what manner of death such a sinner should die. Therefore God is consulted about this, who expressly declareth it (ver. 35). Besides, though the law be in the rigour of it a killing letter, yet might it admit of some favourable construction from necessity,

&c., which might make the offender capable of pardon. So Moses did not rashly doom him; nor ought magistrates be hasty in matters of life and death, as in other cases of an inferior nature. They ought to be wary: God and His Word ought to be consulted. (4) He was condemned, God Himself passing the sentence that he should be stoned (ver. 35). This was the heaviest of all the four kinds of death that malefactors suffered in Israel for capital crimes—some were sentenced to be strangled, others to be slain with the sword, some to be burned, and others to be stoned; the two last were undoubtedly the most painful (because longer in dying), and therefore inflicted upon the grossest offenders. Though in man's judgment this might seem too severe a sentence for such a seeming small offence, yet in God's judgment it is not a light offence to profane the Sabbath by doing needless works upon that holy day. We may well suppose that this sinner (by the connection of ver. 30 with this relation) sinned presumptuously and with public scandal. (5) He was executed accordingly, being carried without the camp, which was a circumstance aggravating the punishment, being a kind of reproach, as the apostle noteth (Heb. xiii. 11–13). This was done to the blasphemer before (Lev. xxiv. 14). This severity doth likewise farther signify the eternal death of such as do not keep the Sabbath of Christ, entering into the rest of God by faith, and ceasing from their own works as God did from His (Heb. iv. 1–11), finding rest for the soul in Christ (Matt. xi. 28). (*C. Ness.*)

Vers. 38–40. *Put upon the fringe . . . a ribband of blue.*—*The law of the fringe and ribband:*—Provision had been just now made by the law for the pardon of sins of ignorance and infirmity, now here is an expedient provided for the preventing of such sins. They are ordered to make fringes upon the borders of their garments, which were to be memorandums to them of their duty, that they might not sin through forgetfulness. 1. The sign appointed is a fringe of silk, or thread, or worsted, or the garment itself ravelled at the bottom, and a blue ribband bound on the top of it to keep it tight (ver. 38). The Jews being a peculiar people, they were thus distinguished from their neighbours in their dress, as well as in their diet; and taught by such little instances of singularity, not to be conformed to the way of the heathen in greater things. Thus likewise they proclaimed themselves Jews wherever they were, as those that were not ashamed of God and His law. 2. The intention of it was to remind them that they were a peculiar people. They were not appointed for the trimming and adorning of their clothes, but to “stir up their pure minds by way of remembrance” (2 Pet. iii. 1). That they might look upon the fringe, and remember the commandments. Many look upon their ornaments to feed their pride, but they must look upon these ornaments to awaken their consciences to a sense of their duty, that their religion might constantly beset them, and they might carry it about with them, as they did their clothes, wherever they went. It was intended particularly to be a preservation from idolatry, That ye “seek not after your own heart,” and your own eyes, in your religious worship. Yet it may extend also to the whole conversation; for nothing is more contrary to God's honour and our own true interest than to walk in the way of our heart, and in the sight of our eyes; for the imagination of the heart is evil, and so is the lust of the eyes. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*) *The ribband of blue:*—The chief use of clothing is defence against the chills and variations of the weather; two subordinate uses are for the promotion of beauty, and for distinction of office. We can be at no loss to perceive that there are mental uses corresponding to the above which require for the soul spiritual clothing. The soul has its summer and its winter, and all the varieties of a mental year. There are seasons of hopefulness and brilliancy in which we have all the elasticity and promise of spring; there are states of peaceful warmth, of continued serene happiness; “the soul's calm sunshine and the heartfelt joy” which bespeak the spirit's summer; but there are likewise periods of decreasing warmth, of incipient depressions, and coolnesses to what has formerly yielded the highest pleasure; until at length we arrive at states of painful cold, the joylessness, the hopelessness, and the sadness, which are the characteristics of the winter of the soul. In this wintry state storms of distressing fears and darkening doubts will rush upon the soul. Strong delusions that we may believe a lie, will, like fierce tempests, howl about us. Thrice happy are they who remember that the Divine Word will be a blessing in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, in summer and in winter; but they should also bear in mind, that to be a protection in all seasons the Divine mercy has provided us with spiritual clothing. The doctrines of religion, when intelligently adopted and adapted to our

particular states, serve this important purpose. And when those doctrines are, as they ought to be, full, comprehensive, and complete, applying themselves to all the departments of human affection, thought, and life, they make a complete dress. We are, then, to speak to the Israelites who are typified by those of our text, the spiritual Israelites; and say first that they clothe themselves with genuine doctrines of Divine truth, with the garments of salvation, and next, that they especially make them fringes in the borders of their garments. After we have meditated upon the doctrines of religion, and seen their fitness to our own states of mind and heart, thus clothed ourselves in them, the next part of our duty is to bring them into life. Many there are who put on religion as a dress for the head, and even also for the breast, but do not bring it down to the feet. But we are to make a border for our garments, and the border must be a fringe. The distinctive feature of a fringe is, that the material of which it is composed is divided into small portions firmly united at the upper part, but hanging with separate forms of beauty at the lower. The idea suggested by this is, that religion must be employed in all the small affairs of daily life as well as on great occasions; the lowest part of our spiritual dress must be a fringe. We are, however, not only commanded to have a fringe to our garments, but to have upon the fringe a ribband of blue. And this leads us to consider the correspondence of colours. Natural colours, we know, originate in natural light. They are the separation of the beauties which are bound up in the sunbeam, and their reflection to the human eye. There is a trinity of fundamental colours, red, blue, and yellow. From the blending of these in varied proportions all others are made. Red, the colour of fire, is the symbol of the truths of love, the fire of the soul. Blue, the colour of the azure depths of the sky, is symbolic of the deep things of the Spirit of God, on which faith delights to gaze. Yellow is the hue of truth which applies to outward life, and in combination with blue it makes green, which corresponds to truth in the letter of the Word, made simple to the common eye of mankind. Blue gives a sense of clearness and depth, in which it surpasses all other hues. Blue, then, is the colour which represents the spirit of the Holy Word, the depths of heavenly wisdom. There is, however, cold blue, as it has more of white in it, and warm blue, as it derives a certain hue from red. There has also been some difficulty in determining the exact shade meant by *Techeleth*, the Hebrew name for this colour. But from a full consideration of this subject we are satisfied it was the name for blue tinged with red, from violet to purple. And this very strikingly brings out the Divine lesson by correspondence. While the blue indicates that in our demeanour in life we should be correct, in harmony with the spirit of truth, the red hue indicates that all our truth ought to be softened and warmed by love. "Speak the truth in love," said the apostle, and to remind them of this duty God commanded the ribband of warm blue to be worn upon the fringe of their garments by the sons of Israel. It is religion in life that is observed by and is attractive to good men. When it not only enlightens the head and rules the heart, but comes down to the skirt of the garment, infusing justice, kindness, and courtesy in every act and word, then it has an eloquence which will inspire many a well-disposed heart to say, "We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you. Let your good works and your good words so shine before men, that they may glorify your Father who is in heaven." (*J. Bayley, Ph.D.*)

*The ordinance of the fringes: gracious reminders of Divine commands:—*I. THE PRONE-NESS OF MAN TO FORGET THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD. This tendency arises from—

1. The sinfulness of human nature.
2. The worldly spirit which so largely prevails in human society.

II. THE ARRANGEMENTS WHICH GOD HAS MADE TO REMIND MAN OF HIS COMMANDMENTS.

1. The means which God employs to remind us of His commandments. (1) The Bible. In this He not only reveals His will concerning us, but illustrates and enforces it in various ways so that we might not forget it. (2) The Holy Spirit. He influences our spirits; speaks in us by means of conscience, &c. (3) Holy examples. In these the will of God is "drawn out in living characters." (4) Warning examples of the evil consequences of overlooking His commands. These witness to us that it is perilous to forget the Divine will, and admonish us against doing so.
2. The design of God in reminding us of His commandments. "That ye wander not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring; that ye may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy unto your God." Recollection of the will of God must be followed by obedience to that will, or it will be worse than useless.

III. THE GROUNDS UPON WHICH GOD REQUIRES FROM US THIS RECOLLECTION OF AND OBEDIENCE TO HIS COMMANDS.

1. His personal relation to us.
2. His gracious doings for us.

(*W. Jones.*) *Remembrancers*:—How wonderful is what we call association! I hang some thought upon an object, and say, "Whenever I come hither, ring for me as a bell of joy"; and upon another I fasten an experience, saying to it, "Toll to me of sadness"; and to another, "Give forth some bold, inspiring strain"; and to another, "Speak to me always of hope." And, thereafter, each thing, true to its nature, whether it be tree, or place, or rock, or house, or that which is therein, never forgets its lesson. Yea, and when we forget, they make us to remember, singing to us the notes which we had taught them. Thus the heart, though it may not dismember itself, to give a soul to the material world, has yet a power half to create in physical things a soul in each for itself. So its life is written out, and it keeps a journal upon trees, upon hills, upon the face of heaven. Is it not for this, then, that in turn God has used every object in nature, every event in life, every function of society, every affection and endearment of human love, yea, and things that are not, the very silences of the world, and memories that are but disembodied events, to represent to us by association His nature and affections? Thus the heaven and the earth do speak of God, and the great natural world is but another Bible, which clasps and binds the written one; for nature and grace are one. Grace is the heart of the flower, and nature but its surrounding petals. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Association*:—Thus a house becomes sacred. Every room has a thousand memories. Every door and window is clustered with associations. And when, after long years, we go back to the house of our infancy, faces look out upon us, and an invisible multitude stand in gate and portal to welcome us, and we hear airy voices speaking again the old words of our childhood. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 41. **I am the Lord your God.**—*Everlasting relationship*:—Can anything be more blessed to God's people than the assurance of the everlasting relationship existing between Himself and them? This everlasting relationship is a hiding-place, refuge, and defence in this desert land; a safe retreat, where the soul may obtain repose, satisfaction, in trying moments. I. TO SAY THAT ETERNAL RELATIONSHIP LEADS TO LICENTIOUSNESS, AND INDUCES A DISREGARD TO ALL MORAL AND SOCIAL DUTIES, IS THE SAME AS TO SAY, THAT TO BRING ANY INDIVIDUAL INTO THE CLEAR, BRIGHT LIGHT OF THE SUN WILL CAUSE A PEBBLE TO BECOME A STUMBLING-BLOCK UNTO HIM. Here is a threefold assertion of relationship in my text, which relationship now is but rarely understood, still less enjoyed, and often reviled. But, now, notice the nature of this relationship. It is a relationship of a father, a Brother, a Comforter, a Guide, a Preceptor. It is a relationship of King and subject, Parent and child, Husband and wife, Friend and friend. II. THE DELIVERANCE EFFECTED AS A PROOF OF THIS RELATIONSHIP. The proof is that He brought His people out of Egypt. "Oh!" says one timid soul, "but I do not belong to Him. I do not think the Lord speaks to me." Well, I do not desire you to make the assertion, unless God has brought you from Egypt. But mock not His love, deny not His grace, insult not His Spirit by questioning the relationship if He has rescued you from the bondage of sin, Satan, and self, the world, and the devil. He has delivered you on purpose to be your God, openly and avowedly. III. THE CLAIM OF GOD IS UPON US, FOR DEVOTEDNESS TO HIS GLORY AND ACTIVITY IN HIS CAUSE. He has brought you out for His own use; and He has a right to all the ardour of your spirit, all the activity of your life, all the affections of your soul. Remember, you are not your own, but bought with a price; therefore glorify God with your body and spirit, which are His. Oh! what ties bind us to devotedness to His name—ties of blood, ties of love, ties of grace. As a King, He created me His subject; as a Deliverer, He brought me to liberty; as my God, He allied me to Himself in everlasting relationship. And if all these ties fail to produce the effect of consecration of heart, and soul, and life to Him, I have one more tie left—namely, the constraint of love. (*J. Irons.*)

CHAPTER XVI.

VERS. 1-35. **Korah, . . . Dathan, and Abiram . . . gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron.**—*Korah, Dathan, and Abiram*:—I. THE REBELS. 1. Influential. 2. Numerous. 3. Deluded—(1) Concerning Moses, who they asserted,

wrongly, was a self-elected leader and an arbitrary prince. (2) Concerning the people, who they assumed (ver. 14) would have willingly followed Moses to the promised land, had he tried to lead them hither. Self-deceived, and deceiving others. II. THEIR SIN. Rebellion against the authority of God which was invested in Moses. 1. Cause in Korah (see chap. iii. 30); whence it appears that for some unexplained cause a younger relative was appointed to the headship of the Kohathites. Korah was descended from the second son of Kohath (chap. vi. 18), whilst the present head was descended from the fourth son. 2. Cause in Dathan and Abiram. The priesthood transferred from the first-born of every family to one particular tribe, and that a branch of the house of Moses. But this was done by command of God, not of Moses alone. 3. Cause in the two hundred and fifty. Their own assumed rights might be interfered with, so they thought. 4. Cause in their followers. General dissatisfaction. They charged upon Moses the effects of their own selfishness. Pride in all of them. III. THEIR PUNISHMENT. 1. Of Divine selection. Left on both sides to Divine arbitration. On the part of the rebels, a defiance; on the side of Moses, humble agreement. 2. Manifest. All should see it, and know thereby the Divine will. 3. Of Divine infliction. God took the matter into His own hands. It was a rebellion against Him, more than Moses. 4. Terrible. 5. Complete. All pertaining to them perished. God could do without men who had thought so much of themselves. Learn: 1. "Our God is a consuming fire." "A fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." 2. Beware of resisting Divine authority. "How shall ye escape," &c. 3. Have we not all rebelled? 4. God was in Christ, making reconciliation, &c. (J. C. Gray.) *Korah, Dathan, and Abiram*:—The particular characters of these three men, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, are not given in Scripture; but they seem to represent generally all those who rise up against the powers ordained of God: Korah the Levite against Aaron; Dathan and Abiram of the tribe of Reuben against Moses; but both conspiracies being combined together, indicates that it is the same temper of mind which rejects the ordinances of God whether it be in Church or State. Their sin was like that of the fallen angels who from envy, it is supposed, arose against the Son of God. But let us consider how far the case is applicable to ourselves now; as it is in some degree peculiar; for Moses and Aaron had their authority all along confirmed of God by outward signs and miracles. Add to which that their characters were such as less than any other to justify opposition or envy. For Moses was the meekest of men; and Aaron was inoffensive in all his conduct toward them. Their pre-eminence, too, was in hardship rather than in wealth or worldly power: in journeyings in the wilderness, not in the riches of Canaan. But these circumstances do not in fact prevent the application to ourselves; for the Pharisees afterwards had no miracles to prove their authority from God; and moreover they were great oppressors, covetous and cruel: yet our Lord says of them, "The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do"; and this He says at the very time when He is cautioning His disciples against their wickedness. They had to obey the ordinance of God, though it had neither outward sign nor holiness to support it. Nor indeed is the presence of God denied by the company of Korah as being vouchsafed to them under the guidance of Moses and Aaron; they say that "the Lord is among them," as He was seen in the pillar of fire and the cloud, in the holy tabernacle, in the manna from heaven: but what they complained of was the want of visible fruits and enjoyments, "Thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey"; "Wilt thou put out the eyes of these men?" as men may say now, "We see not our tokens"; where are our spiritual privileges? where is the fulfilment of all the glorious things which the prophets have spoken of the Christian Church? But if this case is of universal application and for general warning, then the question will arise, are there no allowances, no limitations, to be made; and is there no relief in the case of oppressive governors and bad pastors? must all resistance be like that of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, displeasing to God? and is it never without sin? Let us consider this a little more particularly. If such powers are of God, then He gives such as are suitable to the people over whom they are placed; not necessarily such as they like, but such as are good for them to have, and such as they deserve. For instance, the Roman emperors during the early days of Christianity, were many of them monsters of cruelty and wickedness; but when we come to inquire into the character of the people over whom they were placed, we find the corruption of morals so deep and extensive that they were as bad as the tyrants that governed them. And it was to these Romans and living under

some of the worst of these governors that St. Paul says, "Let every one be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God." And St. Peter unto Christians under the same rule, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by Him." Moreover, in consequence of this, we find in Scripture that kings and people are often together condemned and visited alike. Pharaoh and Egypt both together oppressed Israel; both hardened their hearts; both were cut off together. The same order of Divine providence applies also to spiritual governors; it is so with the Church of God in all times and places; the angels of the Churches and the Churches themselves are tended on, and in each case addressed together as one by their Lord, who has the seven stars in His hand, while He walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. We may therefore consider it as a general law of God's providence, that their rulers both spiritual and temporal will be such as the people are worthy of; that if they need better rulers, the only way in which this can be produced efficiently and effectively, is by becoming better themselves. But a case of difficulty which may arise is this, if a signal repentance should take place among the people, the spirit of grace and supplication should be poured out upon them, and there should be a general awakening; then the deficiency of their pastors and rulers will come before them in a striking light; and then will be their great temptation to take the amendment of such things into their own hands. But yet not well nor wisely. Surely no reformation can be equal to that which took place suddenly and simultaneously, when the disciples of Christ were yet under the Scribes and Pharisees, yet He said, as they sat in Moses' seat they must be obeyed. Or again, when the apostles wrote to Christians, that they must submit themselves to the powers that be, while those powers were the most corrupt of heathen governments. It is true that the change had not then become extensive, or leavened the general state of society, but the law of God's providence was the same, for it was the gradual progress of that change which would bring over them in God's own good time their own true governors, such as were meet for them. And in the meanwhile those evil rulers formed a part of that discipline of faith by which they were perfected and established, being purified thereby as gold in the fire. Moreover, it is observed that the Church of God has flourished more under heathen than under its own Christian rulers. This consideration may allay our impatience; we are at best so weak and frail that we need the iron rod more than the golden sceptre; in our present state the Cross is more suited for us than the crown. In prosperity we lean on an arm of flesh, and are weakened; in adversity we lean on God, and are strengthened. But then it may be said that there is a case far more grievous than this, that of evil ministers in the Church itself, whether it be of chief pastors, or of those in their own nearer and subordinate sphere. These are trials peculiarly heavy to a good man; and there are some cases which can only be considered as severe visitations of God, and the scourge of sin. But if God does not afford the power of remedying this great evil, then the same law of patience must be applied. In one ruler or pastor you may read God's wrath, in another His love. You cannot reject either; take His wrath in meekness, and He may show you His love. And in the meanwhile, with regard to any particular case of great trial, we must practise forbearance, and God will remember us in His own good time. This duty of meekness and patience applies to a case so far as it is one we cannot remedy, like any evil or scourge that comes to us from God's hand, we must take it as our punishment from Him. But then it may be said, when the case is one that implies grievous sin, an example which dishonours God, corrupts Christ's little ones, and poisons the fount of life, are we to acquiesce in this? Does not the love of God constrain us not to resign ourselves to such evil—to lift up our voice and cry—to move heaven and earth? This is most true: for surely there is a remedy with God. When He has forbidden one way of redress, He has pointed out another and a better. Our Lord has pointed out the one and only way, and that is the way of prayer. He did not even Himself send forth apostles without it. Many are cast down because the Church is in bonds. It can neither appoint for itself suitable pastors, nor set aside evil ministers, nor manage its own affairs, and the government of it is falling into the hands of its enemies. But these are not the great evils to be feared; the one great cause for apprehension is this, whether in the body of the Church at large the spirit of prayer is sufficiently strong to cast off all these impediments; for where prayer is, all such evils from without are thrown off, even

as in the spring of the year nature throws off all the chains of winter. The imprisoned eagle may even yet soar aloft, and unfold her wing in the free expanse of heaven. (*Isaac Williams, B.D.*) *Korah, Dathan, and Abiram*:—I. THE SIN. 1. A jealousy of the privileges and positions of God's appointed priesthood. 2. A lack of reverence for sacred things. 3. An unauthorised and presumptuous intrusion into Divine mysteries. II. THE CONVICTION. 1. Moses acted wisely. 2. Modestly. 3. Prudently. III. THE PUNISHMENT. 1. It destroyed the guilty. 2. It involved the innocent. 3. It was deterrent in its tendency. Lessons: 1. The fatal consequences of extreme irreverence. 2. Before we find fault with others we should take heed to ourselves. 3. All who attempt to get to heaven through their own efforts, instead of by the merits of the great High Priest, Jesus Christ, shall share the fate of these wicked men. (*Preacher's Analyst.*) *Korah, Dathan, and Abiram*:—I. The sin of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram was this: THEY WERE DISCONTENTED WITH THE ARRANGEMENT MADE FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP BY THE CHOOSING OUT OF AARON AND HIS FAMILY TO BE PRIESTS. The argument they used was a very plausible one, because it depended upon the great truth of the Lord's being with all His people, consecrating and sanctifying them all, making them all in a certain sense holy to the Lord, in a certain sense priests. It also flattered the vanity of the people, and strengthened them in the notion that they were oppressed by their rulers. II. THE ANSWER TO THIS ARGUMENT WAS THAT MOSES AND AARON HAD NOT LIFTED THEMSELVES UP AT ALL; THE LORD HAD LIFTED THEM UP. This was the answer which was ultimately given, with very terrible emphasis, by the swallowing up of Korah and his company. Korah and his company had laid great stress on the fact that all the congregation of the Lord were holy. Moses and Aaron might very well have replied, that they for their part by no means questioned the fact. Moses had never represented the choice of Aaron and his family as a declaration that they only of the people were holy. Nothing could be a greater mistake on the part of the people than to take this view of the priestly consecration. III. BETWEEN OUR OWN PRIESTHOOD AND THAT OF THE ISRAELITES THERE IS STILL THE GREAT COMMON GROUND OF MINISTRY BEFORE GOD IN BEHALF OF OTHERS WHICH MUST BE AT THE BASIS OF EVERY RELIGION. Hence both priest and people may learn a lesson. The priest may learn that his office does not imply that he is holier or better than his brethren, but that it does imply greater responsibility, greater opportunities of good, greater sin if he does evil. And the people may learn to be gentle and considerate to those who are over them in the Lord, not to be ready to find fault and condemn, but rather to be charitable, and forbearing, and gentle. (*Bp. Harvey Goodwin.*) *Korah, Dathan, and Abiram*:—God has brought the Israelites out of Egypt. One of the first lessons which they have to learn is, that freedom does mean license and discord—does not mean every one doing that which is right in his own eyes. From that springs self-will, division, quarrels, revolt, civil war, weakness, profligacy, and ruin to the whole people. Without order, discipline, obedience to law, there can be no true and lasting freedom; and therefore order must be kept at all risks, the law obeyed, and rebellion punished. Now rebellion ought to be punished far more severely in some cases than in others. If men rebel here, in Great Britain or Ireland, we smile at them, and let them off with a slight imprisonment, because we are not afraid of them. They can do no harm. But there are cases in which rebellion must be punished with a swift and sharp hand. On board a ship at sea, for instance, where the safety of the whole ship, the lives of the whole crew, depend on instant obedience, mutiny may be punished by death on the spot. And so it was with the Israelites in the desert. All depended on their obedience. The word must be, Obey or die. As for any cruelty in putting Korah, Dathan, and Abiram to death, it was worth the death of a hundred such—or a thousand—to preserve the great and glorious nation of the Jews to be the teachers of the world. Moses was not their king. God brought them out of Egypt. God was their king. That was the lesson which they had to learn, and to teach other nations also. And so not Moses, but God must punish, and show that He is not a dead, but a living God, who can defend Himself, and enforce His own laws, and execute judgment, without needing any man to fight His battles for Him. And God does so. The powers of nature—the earthquake and the nether fire—shall punish these rebels; and so they do. Men have thought differently of the story; but I call it a righteous story, and one which agrees with my conscience, and my reason, and my experience also of the way in which God's world is governed until this day. What, then, are we to think of the earth opening and swallowing them up? This first. That discipline and order are so absolutely necessary for the

well-being of a nation that they must be kept at all risks, and enforced by the most terrible punishments. But how hard, some may think, that the wives and the children should suffer for their parents' sins. We do not know that a single woman or child died then for whom it was not better that he or she should die. And next—what is it, after all, but what we see going on round us all the day long? God does visit the sins of the fathers on the children. But there was another lesson, and a deep lesson, in the earthquake and in the fire. "Who sends the earthquake and the fire? Do they come from the devil—the destroyer? Do they come by chance, from some brute and blind powers of nature?" This chapter answers, "No; they come from the Lord, from whom all good things do come; from the Lord who delivered the Israelites out of Egypt; who so loved the world that He spared not His only-begotten Son, but freely gave Him for us." Now I say that is a gospel which we want now as much as ever men did; which the children of Israel wanted then, though not one whit more than we. You cannot read your Bibles without seeing how that great lesson was stamped into the very hearts of the Hebrew prophets; how they are continually speaking of the fire and the earthquake, and yet continually declaring that they too obey God and do God's will, and that the man who fears God need not fear them—that God was their hope and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore would they not fear, though the earth was moved, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. And we, too, need the same lesson in these scientific days. We too need to fix it in our hearts, that the powers of nature are the powers of God; that He orders them by His providence to do what He will, and when and where He will; that, as the Psalmist says, the winds are His messengers and the flames of fire His ministers. And this we shall learn from the Bible, and from no other book whatsoever. God taught the Jews this by a strange and miraculous education, that they might teach it in their turn to all mankind. (*C. Kingsley, M.A.*)

Korah:—God was pleased under the old, as He has done under the present dispensation, to constitute the priesthood of His Church, in accordance with that principle of orderly arrangement which runs through all His ways, in a threefold order, with a regular distribution and gradation of powers from the lowest to the highest. But the wisdom of men does not quietly acquiesce in God's wisdom when it goes counter to the interests, impulses, and aspirations of self-love. Men are easily brought to doubt the divinity of a system that sets others over them, and assigns them only an inferior station, even though that be honourable and good. The spirit of discontent and rebellion broke out even in the life of Aaron, and during the sojourn in the wilderness. Even thus early did the presumption of man dare to criticise and amend the institutions of God, and under the guise of a zeal for liberty and for right, the favourite pretext of ambition and selfishness, to break the order which God had established, and substitute devices of its own creation. Korah was a Levite, but he aspired also to be a priest, and could not acquiesce in those limitations, which, what he may have called the accident of birth and the arbitrary restraints of the Law, imposed upon him. And he easily drew to him associates in his nefarious enterprise. The sedition was wide-spread, and threatened the most fatal consequences. Jealousy of power and place is contagious, and always finds an answering sentiment in many hearts. Broach it once among any body of men, and it will run "like sparks among the stubble." Equality and the lowering of eminence and distinction, and disregard of law, are popular doctrines, and easily clothe themselves in specious forms. It is alleged that all society is sacred; there is, there ought to be, no special sacredness in any in eminent place, which inferiors in office or men in private condition are bound to recognise and respect. Thus the bonds of social order in the Church, in the State, are loosened and destroyed. We stand on the dignity of human nature, and the spiritual equality of all Christians: we can have no rulers, we will brook no superiors, we will obey no restrictions—the spurious pleas of presumptuous self-will and ambition, in the State and in the Church, in all ages. God, however, quickly interfered in this instance, to vindicate and protect His own appointments, and keep that sacred polity which His wisdom had provided for His Church from being trampled on and destroyed. What, then, is this "gainsaying of Core" to us? and what may we learn from it that is profitable for admonition and instruction in righteousness?

1. We learn the sacredness of the ministry, and of its divinely appointed order. Every man was to know his place and to keep it, and to do the duty of his place and none other, and not, on some specious plea of a higher fitness or a larger usefulness, intrude on work which God had given to others. Now, here are great

principles, and these are applicable to the Church in all her periods and in all her forms. There is a ministry now in the Church, and it is there not because man made it, but God. "Let a man," says St. Paul, "so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." They hold their place, if they are really anything at all, by a *Divine* commission. Without a ministry recognised as truly Divine, there will never be religious stability, nor long, religious life and true Christian morals. And when these are gone, civil liberty and political order will not last long. And the first, the fatal step towards these dreadful losses is taken when that constitution of the ministry which Christ appointed is changed, and the sacred office begins to be looked upon as a thing which men may mould and alter to their convenience and their fancy. 2. But we must spare a little space for the broader lesson which this "gainsaying of Core" teaches us, namely, that in the social system, we all, ministers and laymen, especially ministers, have our place, which is appointed us of God, and our true wisdom and happiness lie in knowing what it is, and keeping in it. Korah had a place, and a very good place, but he did not like it. He sought a better by unlawful means, and he lost all, and "left his name for a curse unto God's chosen." He forgot that God had assigned him his place, and that contentment in it was a part of his religious obedience, the service that God required at his hands. How full this world is of restless and uncomfortable aspirings! Men see around them higher places, happier ones as they think; places that are certainly grander, that shine more, that seem to contain a greater plenitude of good, and to open larger sources of pleasure and enjoyment. They are discontented. They are envious. They get very little comfort from what they have by reason of their uneasy hankerings after what they have not. The true antidote of this great evil is faith; faith in God and in His overruling Providence; faith in the Divine order into which we find ourselves wrought, faith in the social economy under which we live as a Divine structure and appointment; faith in our own assignment to that place and those relations in it, which, whatever we may think of them, are the mind of God concerning us, the work of that great fashioning Hand which "ordereth all things in heaven and earth," and which appoints to all inferior agents their place and their work, not in caprice, not in cruelty, not in partiality, not in a reckless disregard of their rights and their welfare, but in wisdom, in equity, in benevolence, for His glory and the greatest good of the greatest number of His creatures. (*R. A. Hallam, D.D.*) *Whatever evil men do, they are ready to justify it* :—When evil men have committed evil, they are ready to justify their evils that they may seem good. We see this in Saul, 1 Sam. xiii. 11, 12, xv. 15; John xii. 5, 6. Judas pretended the poor and his great care of them; albeit he cared not for them, but for himself. 1. For men are affected to their actions as they are to themselves. Though they be corrupt, yet they would not be thought to be so; and therefore they seek excuses for themselves, as Adam did fig leaves to cover his shame and his sin. 2. If they should pretend nothing, all would be ready to condemn them; therefore, to blind the eyes of others, they cast a mist before them as jugglers used to do that they may not be espied. Uses: 1. This serveth to reprove divers sorts that go about to varnish their actions with false colours, thereby to blind the world and to put out their eyes. These show themselves to be rank hypocrites. 2. We are to judge no otherwise of all such as transgress the law of God, whatsoever their allegations be. How many men are there that think even palpable sins to be no sins at all, because they can blanch and colour them over! (*W. Attersoll.*) *Elevated character exposed to violence* :—Some years ago I went to see the lighthouse which, standing on Dunnet Head—the Cape Orcas of the Romans—guards the mouth of the Pentland Firth. On ascending the tower, I observed the thick plate-glass windows of the lanthorn cracked—starred in a number of places. I turned to the keeper for an explanation. It appears that is done by stones flung up by the sea. The wave, on being thrown forward against the cliff, strikes it with such tremendous force as to hurl the loose stones at its base right up to the height of 300 feet. So are the great light-bearers, by the exposure of their position, and in spite of the elevation of their character, liable to be cracked and starred by the violence of the world. (*T. Guthrie.*) *Seek ye the priesthood also?—Wicked ambition faithfully rebuked* :—I. THE GREATNESS OF THE PRIVILEGES CONFERRED UPON THE LEVITES. II. THE UNRIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE AMBITION CHERISHED BY THEM. Their ambition involved—1. The disparagement of their present privileges. Their privileges "seemed but a small thing unto them." Great as they were, they did not satisfy them. "Ambition," says Trapp, "is restless and unsatisfiable; for, like the crocodile, it

grows as long as it lives." 2. Interference in the Divine arrangements. "Seek ye the priesthood also?" III. THE HEINOUSNESS OF THE REBELLION IN WHICH THEY ENGAGED. Moses points out to them concerning their rebellion that—1. It was unreasonable. "What is Aaron that ye murmur against him?" The high priest was merely an instrument in the hand of the Lord. 2. It was exceedingly sinful. "Thou and all thy company are gathered together against the Lord." "Those resist the prince who resist those that are commissioned by him" (comp. Matt. x. 40; John xiii. 20; Acts ix. 4). Conclusion: 1. Let us crush every rising of ambition which is not in harmony with wisdom and righteousness. 2. Let us seek to give to our ambition a righteous and noble direction. (*W. Jones.*) *The privileges of the Levites*:—1. They were separated from the congregation of Israel, distinguished from them, dignified above them; instead of complaining that Aaron's family was advanced above theirs, they ought to be thankful that their tribe was advanced above the rest of the tribes, though they had been in all respects upon the level with them. Note, it will help to keep us from envying those that are above us, duly to consider how many there are above whom we are placed. Many perhaps who deserve better are not preferred so well. 2. They were separated to very great and valuable honours. (1) To draw near to God, nearer than common Israelites, though they also were a people near unto Him: the nearer any are to God, the greater is their honour. (2) To do the service of the tabernacle. It is honour enough to bear the vessels of the sanctuary, and to be employed in any part of the service of the tabernacle; God's service is not only perfect freedom, but high preferment. Note, those are truly great that serve the public, and it is the honour of God's ministers to be the Church's ministers: nay (which adds to the dignity put upon them), (3) It was the God of Israel Himself that separated them. It was His act and deed to put them in their place, and therefore they ought not to be discontented with that; and He it was likewise that put Aaron into his place, and therefore they ought not to envy that. 3. He convicts them of the sin of undervaluing these privileges, "Seemeth it a small thing unto you?" It ill becomes you, of all men, to grudge Aaron the priesthood, when at the same time that he was advanced to that honour, you were designed to another honour dependent upon it, and shine with rays borrowed from him. Note: (1) The privilege of drawing near to the God of Israel is not a small thing in itself, and therefore must not seem small to us. To those who neglect opportunities of drawing near to God, who are careless and formal in it, to whom it is a task, and not a pleasure, we may properly put this question, Seemeth it a small thing to you that God has made you a people near unto Him? (2) Those who aspire and usurp the honours forbidden them, put a great contempt upon the honours allowed them. We have each of us as good a share of reputation as God sees fit for us, and sees us fit for, and much better than we deserve; and we ought to rest satisfied with it, and not as these here, exercise ourselves in things too high for us: "Seek ye the priesthood also?" They would not own that they sought it, but Moses saw that in their eye: the law had provided very well for those that served at the altar, and therefore they would put in for the office. 4. He interprets their mutiny to be a rebellion against God (ver. 1). While they pretended to assert the holiness and liberty of the Israel of God, they really took up arms against the God of Israel: "Ye are gathered together against the Lord." Note, those that strive against God's ordinances and providences, whatever they pretend, and whether they are aware of it or no, do indeed strive with their Maker. Those resist the prince who resist those that are commissioned by him. For alas! saith Moses, "What is Aaron that ye murmur against him?" If murmurers and complainers would consider that the instruments they quarrel with are but instruments whom God employs, and that they are but what He makes them, and neither more nor less, better nor worse, they would not be so bold and free in their censures and reproaches as they are. They that found the priesthood, as it was settled, a blessing, must give all the praise to God; but if any thought it a burden, they must not therefore quarrel with Aaron, who is but what he is made, and doth as he is bidden. Thus he interested God in the cause, and so might be sure of speeding well in his appeal. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*) *Separation for nearness to God*:—I. GOD'S SEPARATION OF HIS SERVANTS. 1. The demand for this may come with the first Divine call of which the soul is conscious. To one living a worldly life there comes a conviction of the folly of this, which is really a Divine call to rise and pass from it, through surrender to Christ, to the number of the redeemed. But that call is not easy to obey at first. The influences under which we have grown hold us where we are; aims to which we have been devoted,

and in which we have much at stake, refuse to be lightly abandoned; old associations and pleasures throw their arms about us, like the family of Bunyan's pilgrim, detaining us when we would flee; the world's beauty blinds us to the greater beauty of the spiritual, and we fear to cast ourselves into the unknown. 2. This demand is repeated by God's constant requirement of His people. For it is the law of spiritual life to "die daily," to "crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts"; and what is that but to sever ourselves for Christ's sake from objects to which the natural man would cleave! 3. And this demand of God is supplemented by His frequent providence. He calls us to voluntary separation, He also separates us whether we will or no. Evidently spiritual life needs much loneliness. II. THIS SEPARATION IS FOR NEARNESS TO HIMSELF. 1. For apprehending God, we need separation from what is wrong. Every turning, however little, towards the world from the demand of conscience is a turning a little more away from God, till He is behind us and we lose sight of Him, and live as though He were not. Yea, sin not only turns the back on Him, it dims the eye to the spiritual so that though He stand before us we are blind to His presence. 2. Besides this, for communion with God we need separation from engrossing scenes and tasks. "How rare it is," said Fénelon, "to find a soul still enough to hear God speak!" 3. Moreover, for God's tenderest ministry we need separation from other joys. III. THIS IS THE ANSWER TO THE SPIRIT OF MURMURING. Then is the time to think how we are separated for nearness to God, and to hear the question in the text, "Seemeth it but a small thing unto you?" 1. Let it comfort us in enforced severance from what we love. When we reflect on what we are severed from, let us reflect on the rare compensation—what we are severed to. God is the sum of joy, it is heaven to serve Him and to see His face, all else is nothing compared with conscious nearness to Him, and that is our desire and prayer. 2. Let this impel us to seek Divine nearness in the time of our separation. For nearness has not always followed separation in our experience: on the contrary, the seasons of isolation we have referred to have sometimes left us farther from God than we were. May not that be due to the fact that fellowship with Him requires that we go to Him for reception? 3. And let this give us victory over the temptation to cleave to evil. For when we first hear the call to relinquish sin the demand seems too great, as though we were to leave all for nothing. And after our Christian course has begun, it seems impossible to give up many an object we suddenly find forbidden. From what, then, we are called to leave, let us turn to think of what we are called to have. "Fear not, Abram," God said to the patriarch, who had refused the spoil at the slaughter of the kings, "Fear not, Abram, I am thy exceeding great reward!" And so He says to us, adding, as we waver, Lovest thou these more than Me; are they more to you than My favour, My fellowship, Myself? (*C. New.*) *The greater our means are to prevent sin, the more we offend if we reject those means:—We learn hereby that the more helps we have to prevent sin, the greater our sin is if we break these bands and cast these cords from us. The sins of the Israelites are often aggravated, because the Lord had sent His prophets among them (Jer. vii. 13, 14, xi. 7, 8, xxxv. 14; Ps. lxxviii. 17, 31, 35, 56; Matt. xi. 21–24; Dan. ix. 5, 6). The reasons: 1. First, because those men sin against knowledge, having the Word to inform them and their own consciences to convince them. 2. Secondly, it argueth obstinacy of heart; they have many strokes given them, but they feel none of them. For such as transgress in the midst of those helps that serve to restrain sin do not sin of infirmity, but of wilfulness. Now, the more wilful a man is, the more sinful he is. Uses: 1. This convinceth our times of much sinfulness, and in these times some places, and in those places sundry persons to be greater sinners than others. And why greater? Because our times have had more means to keep from sin than other times have had. What hath not God done for us and to us to reclaim us? Thus do we turn our blessings to be our bane, and God's mercies to be curses upon us. 2. Secondly, it admonisheth all that enjoy the means of preventing sin as benefits and blessings, the Scriptures and Word of God, His corrections, His promises and threatenings, His patience and longsufferance, that they labour to make profit by them and to fulfil all righteousness, lest God account their sin greater than others. 3. Lastly, learn from hence that the Word is never preached in vain, whether we be converted by it or not (see Isa. lv. 10, 11). (*W. Attersoll.*) *Every man in his place:—In all the departments of life there are men who are as Moses and Aaron. Take any department of life that may first occur to the imagination. Shall we say the department of commerce? Even in the market-place we have Moses and Aaron,**

and they cannot be deposed. Where is the man who thinks he could not conduct the largest business in the city? Yet the poor cripple could not conduct it, and the greatest punishment that could befall the creature would be to allow him to attempt to rule a large and intricate commercial concern. But it seems to be hard for a man to see some other man at the very head of commercial affairs whose word is law, whose signature amounts to a species of sovereignty, and to know that all the while he, the observer, is, in his own estimation, quite as good a man—a person of remarkable capacity, and he is only waiting for an opportunity to wear a nimbus of glory—a halo of radiance—that would astound the exchanges of the world. But it cannot be done. There are great business men and small business men: there are wholesale men and retail men, and neither the wholesale nor the retail affects the quality of the man's soul, or the destiny of the man's spirit; but, as a matter of fact, these distinctions are made, and they are not arbitrary: in the spirit of them there is a Divine presence. If men could believe this, they would be comforted accordingly. Every preacher knows in his inmost soul that he is fit to be the Dean of St. Paul's, or the Dean of Westminster—every preacher knows that; but to be something less—something officially lower—and yet to accept the inferior position with a contentment which is inspired by faith in God, is the very conquest of the Spirit of heaven in the heart of man, is a very miracle of grace. (*J. Parker, D.D.*)

Leaders of disaffection:—It is always a most critical moment in the history of an assembly when a spirit of disaffection displays itself; for, if it be not met in the right way, the most disastrous consequences are sure to follow. There are materials in every assembly capable of being acted upon, and it only needs some restless master spirit to arise, in order to work on such materials, and fan into a devouring flame the fire that has been smouldering in secret. There are hundreds and thousands ready to flock around the standard of revolt, when once it has been raised, who have neither the vigour nor the courage to raise it themselves. It is not every one that Satan will take up as an instrument in such work. It needs a shrewd, clever, energetic man—a man of moral power—one possessing influence over the minds of his fellows, and an iron will to carry forward his schemes. No doubt Satan infuses much of all these into the men whom he uses in his diabolical undertakings. At all events, we know, as a fact, that the great leaders in all rebellious movements are generally men of master minds, capable of swaying, according to their own will, the fickle multitude, which, like the ocean, is acted upon by every stormy wind that blows. Such men know how, in the first place, to stir the passions of the people; and, in the second place, how to wield them when stirred. Their most potent agency—the lever with which they can most effectually raise the masses—is some question as to their liberty and their rights. If they can only succeed in persuading people that their liberty is curtailed, and their rights infringed, they are sure to gather a number of restless spirits around them, and do a vast deal of serious mischief. (*C. H. Mackintosh.*)

Discontent a rebellion against God:—God counts it rebellion (cf. xvii. 10). Murmuring is but as the smoke of a fire; there is first a smoke and a smother before the flame breaks forth: and so before open rebellion in a kingdom there is first a smoke of murmuring, and then it breaks forth into open rebellion. Because it has rebellion in the seeds of it, it is counted before the Lord to be rebellion. When thou feelest thy heart discontented and murmuring against the dispensation of God toward thee, thou shouldest check thy heart thus: "Oh! thou wretched heart! What! wilt thou be a rebel against God?" (*J. Burroughs.*)

Fatal discontent:—A fern told me that it was too bad to be always shut up in a shady place, and that it wanted to grow beside the red rose in the garden. The fern said, "I have as much right to be out in the sunshine as the rose has, and I will be out." I transplanted the little malcontent, and in one hot day the sun struck it dead with his dart of fire. Now, if we be where Christ means us to be, in shade or in light, and will grow according to His will, it shall be well with us, but if we touch that which is forbidden, we shall be made to remember that it is written, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." (*J. Parker, D.D.*)

Every man should walk as he is called of God:—As in an orchard there is variety of fruit, apple trees, pear trees, plum trees, &c., and every tree endeavours to suck juice answerable to his kind, that it may bear such a fruit; and an apple tree doth not turn a plum tree, nor a plum tree a cherry tree, &c.; but every tree contents itself to be of its own kind: so in the Church and commonwealth there are varieties of callings, pastors, people, magistrates, subjects; some higher, some lower. And here now every man is to walk as he is called of God, and learn what belongs

thereunto, not to encroach or intermeddle with that which belongs to others : for the saying of that Roman general to the soldier that kept the tents, when he should have been fighting in the field, "*Non amo nimium diligentem*," will be one day used of God, if He calls us to one possession, and we busy ourselves about another ; if He set us on foot, and we will be on horseback ; if He make us subjects, and we must needs be superiors. God will not be pleased with such busybodies. (*J. Spencer.*) **Respect not Thou their offering.**—*The resentment of Moses against sinners* :—Moses, though the meekest man, yet finding God reproached in him, was very wroth ; he could not bear to see a people ruining themselves for whose salvation he had done so much. In this discomposure—1. He appeals to God concerning his own integrity ; whereas they basely reflected upon him as ambitious, covetous, and oppressive in making himself a prince over them. God was his witness—(1) That he never got anything by them : "I have not taken one ass from them," not only not by way of bribery and extortion, but not by way of recompense and gratuity for all the good offices he had done them ; he never took the pay of a general, or salary of a judge, much less the tribute of a prince. He got more in his estate when he kept Jethro's flock than since he came to be king in Jeshurun. (2) That they never lost anything by him : "Neither have I hurt any one of them," no, not the least, no, not the worst, no, not those that had been most peevish and provoking to him. He never abused his power to the support of wrong. Note, those that have never blemished themselves need not fear being blemished. When men condemn us we may be easy, if our hearts condemn us not. 2. He begs of God to plead his cause and clear him by showing His displeasure at the incense which Korah and his company were to offer, with whom Dathan and Abiram were in confederacy. "Lord," said he, "respect not Thou their offering." Wherein he seems to refer to the history of Cain, lately written by his own hand, of whom it is said that to him and his offering God had not respect (*Gen. iv. 4*). These that followed the gainsaying of Korah walked in the way of Cain (they are put together, *Jude ver. 11*), and therefore he prays they might be frowned upon as Cain was, and put to the same confusion. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*) **A fire from the Lord.**—*Presumptuous service* :—No man is indispensable to God. These men had no business to offer incense. God will not have the order of the Church or the order of the universe disturbed without penalty. Things are all fixed, whether you like it or not ; the bounds of our habitation are fixed. He who would upset any axiom of God always goes down into the pit, the earth opens and swallows him up. That will be so until the end of time. It is so in literature, it is so in housekeeping, it is so in statesmanship, it is so in preaching. The whole order of creation is God's ; why can we not simply, lovingly accept it, and say, Good is the will of the Lord ? Why this chafing against the bars of the cage ? Why this discontent with the foundations of things ? The Lord placed me here, it is the only place I am fit for, or I have been qualified by Divine compassion and love for this position : good is the will of the Lord ! Better that incense be not offered than that it be offered by unworthy hands. There is really nothing in the incense ; it is in the motive, in the purpose, it is in the honest handling of the censer, that good is done by any service or by any ceremony. No bad man can preach. He can talk, he can say beautiful words, but he does not preach so as to get at the heart and at the conscience, and so as to bless all the deeper and inner springs of human life and human hope. Officialism is not piety. A man may have a censer, and yet have no right to it. A man may be robed in the clothes of the Church, but be naked before heaven, and be regarded by high heaven as a violator and an intruder. Whoever uses a censer gives himself more or less of publicity : by so much does he become a leader ; and by so much as a man is a leader does God's anger burn hotly against him when he prostitutes his leadership. How many men were there ? Two hundred and fifty. That was a great numerical loss. Yes, it was ; but numerical losses may be moral gains. The congregation must be weighed as well as numbered. Some churches would be fuller if they were emptier. The Church of Christ would be stronger to-day if all nominal professors were shed off, if the earth would open and swallow them up every one. These were two hundred and fifty trespassers. Whatever they were outside the Church, they had no right to be within it in the sense which they now represent by this action. No true man was ever cut off, let me say again and again. The whole emphasis is upon the word "true." He may not be a great man or a brilliant man, he may be nothing of a genius, but if he be true, that is the only genius God desiderates as fundamental and permanent. (*J. Parker, D.D.*)

Vers. 37-40. **Take up the censers.**—*Divine economy*.—What God has kissed must not be lost; what God has consecrated must be preserved. The two hundred and fifty men may be burned up, the censers may be scorched, but they shall be turned to some use in the sanctuary. O thou great Economist, the very stones of Thy house are sacred to Thee; they are not sacred as magically consecrated, but they are sacred because Thou hast told men to seek in the quarries of the earth and in the forests of the land for stone and wood to put together to make a sanctuary for Thee; and once Thine, Thine for ever. The stones are dear to Thee, yea, the dust of Zion is more than the constellations of the sky. If we have given anything to the Cross, it is God's; it will never be unholy. At the beginning of every year some men say, "So much for Christ." They say, "There it is; every penny is His, it will all go to His treasury." Such men can never be vexed and fretted by appeals, because they have given the money, and when they have spent all the money they say so, and God is as pleased with their not giving as with their giving, because they have given it all. They first set it apart, they consecrated it, they took it to the Cross and said, Jesus, this little handful is all Thine; help me to spend it aright. It is all gone, so when the next applicant comes and gets nothing, God is not displeased. So let us give ourselves to Christ; then every hair on our head is His, and will be numbered; all our outgoings and incomings, our downittings and uprisings, will be of consequence to Heaven. Why? Not because of the detailed action, but because the life out of which all of that action came was itself baptized, made holy with the chrism of fire. (*J. Parker, D.D.*)

Vers. 41-50. **On the morrow all the congregation . . . murmured.**—*Transgression and intercession*.—I. A NEW REBELLION RAISED THE VERY NEXT DAY AGAINST MOSES AND AARON. Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and wonder, O earth! Was there ever such an instance of the incurable corruption of sinners! (ver. 41). On the morrow the body of the people mutinied—1. Though they were but newly terrified by the sight of the punishment of the rebels. Warnings slighted. 2. Though they were but newly saved from sharing in the same punishment, and the survivors were as brands plucked out of the burning, yet they fly in the face of Moses and Aaron, to whose intercession they owed their preservation. II. GOD'S SPEEDY APPEARING AGAINST THE REBELS. When they were gathered against Moses and Aaron, perhaps with design to depose or murder them, they looked towards the tabernacle, as if their misgiving consciences expected some frowns from thence; and behold the glory of the Lord appeared (ver. 42) for the protection of His servants, and confusion of His and their accusers. Moses and Aaron thereupon came before the tabernacle, partly for their own safety; there they took sanctuary from the strife of tongues (Psa. xxxvii. 5, xxxi. 20), and partly for advice, to know what was the mind of God upon this occasion (ver. 43). Justice hereupon declares, They deserve to be consumed in a moment (ver. 45). Why should they live another day who hate to be reformed, and whose rebellions are their daily practices? Let just vengeance take place and do its work, and the trouble with them will soon be over; only Moses and Aaron must first be secured. III. THE INTERCESSION WHICH MOSES AND AARON MADE FOR THEM. Though they had as much reason, one would think, as Elias had, to make intercession against Israel (Rom. xi. 7), yet they forgive and forget the indignities offered them, and are the best friends their enemies have. 1. They both fell on their faces, humbly to intercede with God for mercy, knowing how great their provocation was. This they had done several times before upon the like occasion; and though the people had basely requited them for it, yet God having graciously accepted them, they still have recourse to the same method. This is praying always. 2. Moses perceiving that the plague was begun in the congregation of the rebels, i.e., that body of them which was gathered together against Moses, sends Aaron by an act of his priestly office to make atonement for them (ver. 46). And Aaron readily went, burnt incense between the living and the dead, not to purify the infected air, but to pacify an offended God, and so stayed the progress of the judgment (ver. 47). IV. THE RESULT AND ISSUE OF THE WHOLE MATTER. 1. God's justice was glorified in the death of some. Great execution the sword of the Lord did in a very little time. Though Aaron made all the haste he could, yet before he could reach his post of service there were fourteen thousand seven hundred men laid dead upon the spot (ver. 49). Note, those that quarrel with lesser judgments prepare greater for themselves; for when God judgeth He will overcome. 2. His mercy was glorified in the preservation of the rest. God showed them what He could do by His power, and what He might do in justice, but then showed them

what He could do in His love and pity. He would preserve them a people to Himself for all this, in and by a Mediator. The cloud of Aaron's incense coming from his hand stayed the plague. Note, it is much for the glory of God's goodness that many a time, even in wrath, He remembers mercy; and even when judgments have been begun, prayer has put a stop to them, so ready is He to forgive, and so little pleasure doth He take in the death of sinners. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*) *The aggravated rebellion of the people, the effectual intercession of the good, and the justice and mercy of God*:—I. THE AGGRAVATED REBELLION OF THE PEOPLE. 1. Terrible disregard of Divine warnings. 2. Base ingratitude to Moses and Aaron. 3. Profane characterisation of the wicked as the people of God. II. THE SPEEDY INTERPOSITION OF JEHOVAH. 1. The manifestation of His glory. 2. The declaration of the desert of the rebels. III. THE EFFECTUAL INTERCESSION OF MOSES AND AARON. 1. The kindness of Moses and Aaron. Their conduct reminds us of Him who prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." 2. The courage of Aaron. He feared neither the excited people who were embittered against him, nor the pestilence which was smiting down the people by thousands, but "ran into the midst of the congregation," &c. 3. The zeal of Aaron. He was now an old man, yet he "ran into the midst," &c. An example for Christian ministers. 4. The success of Aaron. "The plague was stayed." How great is the power of prayer! IV. THE EXERCISE OF THE JUSTICE AND MERCY OF GOD. 1. Here is an impressive display of Divine justice. Many slain. 2. Here is an encouraging manifestation of Divine mercy. Some spared. Conclusion: Learn—1. The heinousness of sin. 2. The great value of a faithful ministry. 3. The readiness of God to forgive sin. (*W. Jones.*) *Make an atonement for them. The sin of man and the salvation of God*:—I. THERE IS AN AWFUL CONTROVERSY BETWEEN A HOLY GOD AND A REBELLIOUS WORLD. Our sin resembles theirs in many aspects, and has the same aggravations. 1. As it directly strikes against the authority and the grace of God, whatever be the form it assumes. 2. As it is often committed in the face of frequent and awful warnings. 3. As it is heightened by the experience of God's preserving and upholding mercy. II. THERE IS AT HAND A PRESCRIBED AND DIVINELY APPROVED REMEDY. 1. That our only escape from threatened wrath is through the mediation and advocacy of our High Priest. 2. That the plan of salvation by faith is as efficacious in reality as it is simple in its mode of application. 3. That an immediate application to it is our only protection against certain ruin. "Go quickly." (*S. Thodey.*) *An awful spectacle, and a surprising remedy*:—I. AN AWFUL SPECTACLE EXHIBITED. When private prayer is a task, and the minor moralities of life begin to be disregarded, there are fearful symptoms of decay and declension. "The plague is begun." II. THE SURPRISING REMEDY FOUND. "Take a censer," &c. Where is the physician who would have recommended this as a cure for the plague? Who would have thought that the appearance of a single priest amidst the dying and the dead should have stopped the progress of the pestilence? Yet the incense and the fire and the oblation accomplish that for Israel which all the wisdom of the Egyptians could never have achieved. Who does not, in like manner, rebel against God's appointed method of pardon? or question the mysterious virtue of Christ's atoning blood, and doubt the efficacy of faith, repentance, and prayer? III. A PRACTICAL APPLICATION DEMANDED. 1. What infinite solemnity attaches to all the offices of religion! Death and life are involved. The two hundred and fifty men that offered incense perished: their spirit was bad. What if we bring strange fire! Aaron's offering saves life. If awful to preach, so also to hear. 2. How dreadful if the plague be in the heart, and we, unconscious of danger, neglect the remedy! "Examine yourselves." 3. What need ministers have for the prayers and sympathies of their people! 4. Rejoice in the absolute sufficiency of salvation applied by the Spirit. (*Ibid.*) *Aaron staying the plague*:—I. THE WILLINGNESS OF AARON TO INTERCEDE. 1. Regardless of the plague. 2. Regardless of the people's enmity. II. THE NATURE OF AARON'S INTERCESSION. III. THE SUCCESS OF AARON'S INTERCESSION. Conclusion: 1. Let us tremble at the wrath of an offended God. 2. Let us rejoice in the intercession of our Great High Priest. (*J. D. Lane, M.A.*) *The plague stayed*:—I. THE EVIL. II. THE PUNISHMENT. 1. Divine. 2. By the plague. (1) Fatal. (2) Speedily so. (3) Invariably so. III. THE REMEDY. 1. In itself, not apparently adapted. 2. Connected with pious intercession. 3. Intercession grounded on sacrifice. 4. Efficient. (1) Completely. (2) At once. Learn: 1. The extreme evil of sin. 2. The riches of the grace of God. 3. The immediate duty of the sinner—to call earnestly on the Lord. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *Mercy*

rejoiceth against judgment :—I. SIN AND ITS CONSEQUENCE. 1. The sin of the Israelites was rebellion against God. 2. The terrible visitation. II. THE ATONEMENT, AND ITS SUCCESS. 1. A significant act. (1) Aaron a type of the Lord Jesus. (2) He stood between the dead and the living. (3) Jesus has done more than Aaron. 2. The completeness of His atonement. II. THE SPECIAL LESSONS TO BE DERIVED FROM HENCE. 1. The faithful minister of God's Word dares not withhold the instruction to be derived from it concerning the terrible judgments which ungodly men bring on themselves by continuing in sin against a just and holy God. 2. If the judgment against sin is so terrible to contemplate, how much need have we to accept God's own way of deliverance! (*E. Auriol, M.A.*)

He stood between the dead and the living. *The high priest standing between the dead and the living* :—The whole scene is typical of Christ; and Aaron, as he appears before us in each character, is a most magnificent picture of the Lord Jesus. I. First, look at Aaron as the LOVER of the people. See in Aaron the lover of Israel; in Jesus the lover of His people. Aaron deserves to be very highly praised for his patriotic affection for a people who were the most rebellious that ever grieved the heart of a good man. You must remember that in this case he was the aggrieved party. Is not this the very picture of our Lord Jesus? Had not sin dishonoured Him? Was He not the Eternal God, and did not sin therefore conspire against Him as well as against the Eternal Father and the Holy Spirit? Was He not, I say, the one against whom the nations of the earth stood up and said, "Let us break His bands asunder, and cast His cords from us"? Yet He, our Jesus, laying aside all thought of avenging Himself, becomes the Saviour of His people. Well, you note again, that Aaron in thus coming forward as the deliverer and lover of his people, must have remembered that he was abhorred by this very people. They were seeking his blood; they were desiring to put him and Moses to death, and yet, all thoughtless of danger, he snatches up his censor and runs into their midst with a Divine enthusiasm in his heart. He might have stood back, and said, "No, they will slay me if I go into their ranks; furious as they are, they will charge this new death upon me and lay me low." But he never considers it. Into the midst of the crowd he boldly springs. Most blessed Jesus, Thou mightest not only think thus, but indeed Thou didst feel it to be true. Thou wast willing to die a martyr, that Thou mightest be made a sacrifice for those by whom Thy blood was spilt. You will see the love and kindness of Aaron if you look again; Aaron might have said, "But the Lord will surely destroy me also with the people; if I go where the shafts of death are flying they will reach me." He never thinks of it; he exposes his own person in the very forefront of the destroying one. Oh, Thou glorious High Priest of our profession, Thou mightest not only have feared this which Aaron might have dreaded, but Thou didst actually endure the plague of God; for when Thou didst come among the people to save them from Jehovah's wrath, Jehovah's wrath fell upon Thee. The sheep escaped, but by "His life and blood the Shepherd pays, a ransom for the flock." Oh, Thou lover of thy Church, immortal honours be unto Thee! Aaron deserves to be beloved by the tribes of Israel, because he stood in the gap and exposed himself for their sins; but Thou, most mighty Saviour, Thou shalt have eternal songs, because, forgetful of Thyself, Thou didst bleed and die, that man might be saved! I would again draw your attention to that other thought that Aaron as a lover of the people of Israel deserves much commendation, from the fact that it is expressly said, he ran into the host. That little fact of his running is highly significant, for it shows the greatness and swiftness of the Divine impulse of love that was within. Ah! and was it not so with Christ? Did He not haste to be our Saviour? Were not His delights with the sons of men? Did He not often say, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished"? His dying for us was not a thing which He dreaded. "With desire have I desired to eat this passover." II. Now view Aaron as THE GREAT PROPITIATOR. Wrath had gone out from God against the people on account of their sin, and it is God's law that His wrath shall never stay unless a propitiation be offered. The incense which Aaron carried in his hand was the propitiation before God, from the fact that God saw in that perfume the type of that richer offering which our Great High Priest is this very day offering before the throne. Aaron as the propitiator is to be looked at first as bearing in his censor that which was necessary for the propitiation. He did not come empty-handed. Even though God's high priest, he must take the censor; he must fill it with the ordained incense, made with the ordained materials; and then he must light it with the sacred fire from off the altar, and with that alone. Behold, then,

Christ Jesus as the propitiator for His people. He stands this day before God with His censer smoking up towards heaven. Behold the Great High Priest! See Him this day with His pierced hands, and head that once was crowned with thorns. Mark how the marvellous smoke of His merits goeth up for ever and ever before the eternal throne. 'Tis He, 'tis He alone, who puts away the sins of His people. His incense, as we know, consists first of all of His positive obedience to the Divine law. He kept His Father's commands; He did everything that man should have done; He kept to the full the whole law of God, and made it honourable. Then mixed with this is His blood—an equally rich and precious ingredient. The blood of His very heart—mixed together with His merits—these make up the incense—an incense incomparable—an incense surpassing all others. Besides that, it was not enough for Aaron to have the proper incense. Korah might have that too, and he might have the censer also. That would not suffice—he must be the ordained priest; for mark, two hundred and fifty men fell in doing the act which Aaron did. Aaron's act saved others; their act destroyed themselves. So Jesus, the propitiator, is to be looked upon as the ordained one—called of God as was Aaron. But let us note once more in considering Aaron as the great propitiator, that we must look upon him as being ready for his work. He was ready with his incense, and ran to the work at the moment the plague broke out. The people were ready to perish and he was ready to save. Jesus Christ stands ready to save thee now; there is no need of preparation; He hath slain the victim; He hath offered the sacrifice; He hath filled the censer; He hath put to it the glowing coals. His breastplate is on His breast; His mitre is on His head; He is ready to save thee now. Trust Him, and thou shalt not find need for delay. III. Now view Aaron as THE INTERPOSER. Let me explain what I mean. As the old Westminster Annotations say upon this passage, "The plague was moving among the people as the fire moveth along a field of corn." There it came; it began in the extremity; the faces of men grew pale, and swiftly on, on it came, and in vast heaps they fell, till some fourteen thousand had been destroyed. Aaron wisely puts himself just in the pathway of the plague. It came on, cutting down all before it, and there stood Aaron the interposer with arms outstretched and censer swinging towards heaven, interposing himself between the darts of death and the people. Just so was it with Christ. Wrath had gone out against us. The law was about to smite us; the whole human race must be destroyed. Christ stands in the forefront of the battle. "The stripes must fall on Me!" He cries; "the arrows shall find a target in My breast. On me, Jehovah, let Thy vengeance fall." And He receives that vengeance, and afterwards upspringing from the grave He waves the censer full of the merit of His blood, and bids this wrath and fury stand back. IV. Now view Aaron as THE SAVIOUR. It was Aaron, Aaron's censer, that saved the lives of that great multitude. If he had not prayed the plague had not stayed, and the Lord would have consumed the whole company in a moment. As it was, you perceive there were some fourteen thousand and seven hundred that died before the Lord. The plague had begun its dreadful work, and only Aaron could stay it. And now I want you to notice with regard to Aaron, that Aaron, and especially the Lord Jesus, must be looked upon as a gracious Saviour. It was nothing but love that moved Aaron to wave his censer. The people could not demand it of him. Had they not brought a false accusation against him? And yet he saves them. It must have been love and nothing but love. Say, was there anything in the voices of that infuriated multitude which could have moved Aaron to stay the plague from before them? Nothing! nothing in their character! nothing in their looks! nothing in their treatment of God's High Priest! and yet he graciously stands in the breach, and saves them from the devouring judgment of God! If Christ hath saved us He is a gracious Saviour indeed. And then, again, Aaron was an unaided saviour. He stands alone, alone, alone! and herein was he a great type of Christ who could say, "I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Me." Do not think, then, that when Christ prevails with God, it is because of any of your prayers, or tears, or good works. He never puts your tears and prayers into His censer. They would mar the incense. There is nothing but His own prayers, and His own tears, and His own merits there. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Nor doth He need a helper; "He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." "He is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him." He was, then, you will perceive, a gracious Saviour, and an unaided one; and, once more, Aaron as a saviour was all-sufficient. Trust thou thy soul with Christ, and thy sins are at

once forgiven, at once blotted out. V. Aaron as THE DIVIDER—the picture of Christ. Aaron the anointed one stands here; on that side is death, on this side life; the boundary between life and death is that one man. Where his incense smokes the air is purified, where it smokes not the plague reigns with unmitigated fury. There are two sorts of people here this morning, and these are the living and the dead, the pardoned, the unpardoned, the saved, and the lost. A man in Christ is a Christian; a man out of Christ is dead in trespasses and sins. “He that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ is saved, he that believeth not is lost.” Christ is the only divider between His people and the world. On which side, then, art thou to-day? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The plague in the wilderness*:—I. To say that this evil had its origin in sin, would be to say nothing. All evil proceeds from sin: there is not a pang or sorrow in the universe which has not this as its source. But then suffering owes its existence to sin in various ways. Sometimes it is sent in mercy to prevent sin; thus Paul had a thorn in the flesh “lest he should be exalted.” At other times it comes to discover sin and subdue it in the Christian’s heart. “Before I was afflicted,” says David, “I went astray, but now have I kept Thy word.” More frequently, however, its design is to answer the purposes of God’s moral government; to punish sin; to manifest the abhorrence in which the great Ruler of the universe holds it, and thus to deter His creatures from the commission of it. And such was its object here. The Israelites had sinned against the Lord; this plague was the punishment of their sin. 1. This offence involved in it an overlooking of God’s providence; at all events, a refusing to acknowledge it. God will not allow us to say for ever, “Accident brought this evil on me, chance this disease, a casualty this bereavement, the injustice or treachery of my fellow-man this loss and poverty.” Either by His Spirit, or by His providence, or by both, God will drive this atheism out of us. He will force us to say, “It is the Lord. He is in this place, and I knew it not. Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth.” 2. The murmuring of these sinners included in it also a daring censure of God’s ways. Whatever God does bears the impress of God. In some way or other it manifests His perfections, and consequently is calculated to bring honour to His name. Now a mind in a right state praises Him for every work of His hands; and it does so on account of the traces of His glory it either discovers in that work, or, though hidden, believes to be there. Indeed, this is God’s great design in all His doings, to draw forth praise from His creatures by revealing to them His excellencies, and thus to surround Himself with a delighted and adoring universe. It follows, then, that to censure any of God’s ways is, as far as in us lies, to frustrate the object at which God aims in these ways; to rob Him of His honour, and worse than this—to asperse His character and vindicate His enemies. And of this offence these Israelites were guilty. 3. There was yet a third evil comprehended in the murmuring of these Israelites; and this was a contempt of God’s warnings. Millions of our race have already perished; the destroying angel is hastening to cut down millions more. The world some of us deem so fair and happy is nothing better than the camp of Israel—a scene of mercy, it is true, but yet a scene of misery, terror, and death. How anxious, then, should we be to look around for a deliverer! Blessed be God, there is One near. This history speaks of Him. II. Consider now THE CESSATION OF THE PESTILENCE. 1. It was effected by one who might have been supposed least likely to interfere for such a purpose. Can we fail to discover here the great High Priest of God’s guilty church, the despised and rejected Jesus? Aaron was a type of Him. 2. The cessation of this plague was attended with a display of the most self-denying and ardent love. 3. The cessation of this plague was brought about by means that seemed altogether inadequate, that appeared, in fact, to have no connection at all with the end proposed. (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *Staying the plague*:—1. The origin of the judgment here spoken of. Men quickly forget the Almighty. 2. The means adopted to arrest its devastating progress. Mediation. 3. The feelings of gratitude which the removal of the plague must have inspired. (*W. C. Le Breton, M.A.*) *Standing between the dead and the living*:—In this, as in all other similar occasions, we perceive the presence of the Eternal Son, preparing the way for that perfect scheme of redemption which was to be unfolded in the fulness of time. Jesus in truth stood between the dead and the living; for Aaron was His delegate and servant; and I would apply the particulars of the present transaction to our own case and circumstances. The plague, then, to which we may now advert is the plague of sin, and the threatened death is the death of the soul. Truly the plague has begun. It began in paradise, and has been raging ever since; and as soon as it broke out, the Lord appeared to intercede and to atone. We can entertain no doubt of the exis-

tence of the evil; we cannot look far into the world, not far into the Christian world, without beholding lamentable proof of its ravages: intemperance, profligacy, and even blasphemy, meet us in every quarter; the moral pestilence is positively raging around and within the Christian camp. Nor need we look abroad for proof of this awful fact; we have each of us an evidence in our own bosom. But it was not merely the existence of the plague itself which must have wrought upon the Israelites, and have made them to accept the proffered remedy; it was also that so many lay dead before them; such multitudes of their neighbours and friends had been swept away before their eyes. And have not we, on this ground, many powerful inducements also? Have there not been presented before us in the page of history, yea, in daily report, awful numbers of the human race, to all appearance dying of the plague, dying in their trespasses and sins? Again, as the Israelites saw many destroyed, so did they likewise see many recovered and saved; and that would encourage them to lay hold of the means ordained. We also have similar encouragements under the gospel. It is not altogether a scene of desolation, of heedlessness and ruin; there have been many splendid trophies of Divine grace, many careless sinners awakened and rescued from the grave of destruction. (*J. Stade, M.A.*) *The living and the dead*:—Every minister of Jesus Christ, when he stands in the pulpit, stands in the same responsible relation as Aaron did. I stand and look at the living on one side, and on the other I see the dead. The Bible, up and down, declares that an unforgiven soul is dead in trespasses and in sins. What killed the soul? The plague. What kind of a plague—the Asiatic plague? No; the plague of sin. The Asiatic plague was epidemic. It struck one, it struck a great many; and this plague of sin is epidemic. It has touched all nations. It goes from heart to heart, and from house to house; and we are more apt to copy the defects than we are the virtues of character. The whole race is struck through with an awful sickness. Explorers have gone forth, by ship, and reindeer sledge, and on foot, and they have discovered new tribes and villages; but they have never yet discovered a sinless population. On every brow the mark of the plague—in every vein the fever. On both sides of the equator, in all zones, from arctic to antarctic, the plague. Yes, it is contagious. We catch it from our parents. Our children catch it from us. Instead of fourteen thousand seven hundred, there are more than one thousand millions of the dead. As I look off upon the spiritually dead, I see that the scene is loathsome. Now, sometimes you have seen a body after decease more beautiful than in life. The old man looked young again. But when a man perished with the Asiatic plague he became repulsive. There was something about the brow, about the neck, about the lip, about the eye, that was repulsive. And when a man is dead in sin he is repulsive to God. We are eaten of that abominable thing which God hates, and unless we are resuscitated from that condition, we must go out of His sight. But I remark again, that I look off upon the slain of this plague, and I see the scene is one of awful destruction. Gout attacks the foot, ophthalmia the eye, neuralgia the nerves; and there are diseases which take only, as it were, the outposts of the physical castle; but the Asiatic plague demolishes the whole fortress. And so with this plague of sin. It enwraps the whole soul. It is complete destruction—altogether undone, altogether gone astray, altogether dead. When I look upon those who are slain with this plague, I see that they are beyond any human resurrection. Medical colleges have prescribed for this Asiatic plague, but have never yet cured a case. And so I have to tell you that no earthly resurrection can bring up a soul after it is dead in sin. You may galvanise it, and make it move around very strangely; but galvanism and life are infinitely apart. None but the omnipotent God can resurrect it. I go further and say, that every minister of the gospel, when he stands up to preach, stands between the living and the dead of the great future. Two worlds, one on either side of us: the one luminous, the other dark; the one a princely and luxuriant residence, the other an incarceration. Standing between the living who have entered upon their eternal state, and the dead who shall tarry in their eternal decease, I am this moment. Oh, the living, the living, I think of them to-night. Your Christian dead have not turned into thin clouds and floated off into the immensities. Living, bounding, acting, they are waiting for you. Living! Never to die. (*T. De Witt Talmage.*) *The prevailing Intercessor*:—Such was our High Priest who perceived that, on account of man's transgression, wrath was gone forth from the presence of the Lord, and that the plague was begun among the people. And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor. Therefore He arrayed Himself in the holy garments of glory and beauty; He put on a breastplate of

righteousness, and a robe of inviolable sanctity, and He was clad, over all, with zeal as a cloak. He was anointed with the oil of gladness, with the Holy Ghost, and with power; and on His head was a crown of salvation and glory. Thus adorned and fitted for the work, He put on, for incense, the merits of His sufferings. He ran into the midst of God's people as a Mediator, interposing Himself between the parties at variance, in order to reconcile them. He met the burning wrath, and turned it aside from all believers. And so the plague is stayed. A stop is put to the progress of everlasting destruction. "There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." And can anything, then, prevent our accepting this atonement, and thankfully receiving the benefits of this intercession? Nothing can, but an utter ignorance of our sin, and of our danger. Could a dying Israelite have been prevailed upon, think you, to reject the atonement and intercession of Aaron? No, surely. Only see how hope revives in their countenances, and joy sparkles in their eyes, all turned and fixed upon him in the execution of his priestly office. And why? Because they were sensible of their wretched and perilous estate. They needed not to be told that they were expiring by the pestilence. Oh, why are not we so? Why do we hear of the atonement and intercession of the Holy Jesus with so much cold indifference? Why, but because we see not, we know not, we feel not the want of them. And yet, what is there, within us, or without us, that doth not teach and show it us? To tell you that the world is full of sorrow, is no news; to tell you that the world is full of sin, is, I presume, no news. And from what would you desire to be delivered, if not from sin and sorrow? What, in point of wretchedness, was the camp of Israel with the pestilence in the midst of it, if compared to such a world as this? Go, thou who art tempted to reject, or to neglect the satisfaction of Christ, go to the bed of sickness, ask him who lies racked with pain, and trembling at the thoughts of the wrath to come, what his opinion is concerning the doctrine of atonement; and observe how the name of a Saviour and Intercessor puts comfort and gladness into his affrighted soul, at a time when the treasures and the crowns of eastern kings would be utterly condemned, as equally vain, worthless, and unprofitable, with the dust of the earth. (*Bp. Horne.*)

CHAPTER XVII.

VERS. 1-13. Write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi.—Aaron's rod:—I. INSTRUCTIVE TO THE ISRAELITES. 1. An end hereby put to murmuring. By an incontrovertible sign they knew who was the true priest. 2. A preventative furnished against future rebellion. Miracles apt to be forgotten; of this the evidence was to be preserved. Kept for a token. **II. SUGGESTIVE TO CHRISTIANS.** Every man has some rod on which he leans. The Christian's is faith. Like Aaron's rod, faith flourishes—1. Most in the sanctuary. There are strengthening influences, and a Divine power. It will become a barren stock elsewhere. 2. Under circumstances in which other rods cannot live. The almond flourishes even before the winter is fully past. Faith budding in adversity. 3. Produces fruit and flowers on the bare stock of adversity. 4. Bears fruit speedily when God causes His blessing to rest upon it. "Believe and be saved." 5. Stirs the Christian up to vigilance. Almond-tree a symbol of watchfulness. **III. TYPICAL OF CHRIST.** 1. For it is perpetual. Aaron's rod laid up as a lasting remembrance. 2. It bore fruit on a barren stock. Jesus, a root out of a dry ground. 3. It was distinguished among the sceptres of the princes. Christ's kingdom and sceptre rule over all. He is a plant of renown. 4. It was the object of special favour. So in Jesus, He "was well pleased." He was "elect and precious." **IV. SYMBOLICAL OF A TRUE TEACHER.** 1. His home the house of God. 2. Presents himself constantly before the testimony. 3. In himself dry and barren. 4. Relies upon God for fruitfulness. 5. Produces by Divine help not flowers only, but fruit also. 6. As a dry and lifeless stock he receives quickening power from God; so with his flowers and fruit he presents himself before God, and offers all his works to Him. **Learn—**1. The wisdom of God in choice of methods. 2. To seek a strong and living and practical faith. 3. To rejoice in and rely upon the perpetual high priesthood of Christ. 4. To endeavour, like the almond-tree, to bring forth fruit early. (*J. C. Gray.*) **Aaron's rod that budded:—**This is our subject: the miraculous conversion of Aaron's rod

into a living, blossoming, and fruit-bearing plant. It must have been a most convincing prodigy for the purpose it was designed to answer, for the people no sooner saw it than they cried out in remorse for their wavering allegiance, "Behold, we die! we perish! we all perish!" But beyond the age wherein the marvel occurred, this putting vegetable life into that dry staff has frequently been borrowed and used for other objects. Thus Achilles, in classic poetry, when enraged against Agamemnon, is made by Homer to refer to this miracle:—

"But hearken! I shall swear a solemn oath
By this same sceptre, which shall never bud,
Nor boughs bring forth, as once; which, having left
Its stock on the high mountains at what time
The woodman's axe lopt off its foliage green
And stript its bark, shall never grow again:—
By this I swear!"

And amongst Latin literature you will, some of you, remember that a certain king confirms a covenant with Æneas by a similar oath. I. We begin by reminding you that AMONG THE GREATEST OF OUR BLESSINGS IN THIS WORLD IS OUR STRICT OBLIGATION TO DO THE DIVINE WILL AND TO KEEP THE DIVINE LAW. It is far more worth our while to sing of God's statutes than it is to sing of God's promises. Where should we be in a country without human authority, and a human authority founded on a reverence for the Divine? Very truly does Bushnell say that, "without law, man does not live, he only grazes." If he had no government he would never discern any reason for existence, and would soon not care to exist. How different is the world of Voltaire from the world of Milton! The one finds nothing but this clay world and its material beauties, flashes into a shallow brilliancy of speech, and, weaving a song of surfaces, empties himself into a book of all that he has felt or seen. But the other, at the back of all and through all visible things, beholds a spirit and a Divinity. Now is there not a very beautiful picture of the comeliness and the beneficence of law in the old miracle that was wrought upon the rod of Aaron? That staff, as we have put it to you, was selected as the sign of authority. This was a declaration, first, that no law was perfect that did not display life and beauty and fertility; and a declaration, secondly, that by God's choice that perfect law dwelt in the high priest. But apart from the imagery as a message to the children of Israel, I cling to that blooming staff as the very best type I can find anywhere of what God's rule is amongst us and in His Church. I find myself taught by this early prodigy on Aaron's staff that God's dominion is the dominion of the almond-branch. It is a rod; alas! for us, if there were no rod. But it is a rod displaying all the three several pledges and gradations of life; and thus—oh! beautiful coincidence, if it be nothing more—God turns His law towards the children of men into what the forbidden tree so falsely appeared to the first transgressor—"pleasant to the eye, and good for food." Of course I know that the staff or the sceptre is the symbol of authority, because a staff is that with which one person smites another. The ultimate significance of a rod is a blow. But is it nothing to be taught by God's picture-alphabet of the Old Testament that He smites only with buds, and with flowers, and with fruit? This seems to change, even to any child's apprehension, the whole character of the sovereignty under which we bow in the modern camp of the Church. You tremble as you read the chapter of hard duties. Turn the leaf, and you will come upon the chapter of precious promises. There is not a verse in the Bible that is not in flower with some comfort; aye, though it be a verse that smites you with a difficult commandment. You are never to tell a man to do a single thing in religion without telling him that God will help him to do it. You are never to command a sacrifice from me for Christ's sake without comforting me with the assurance that "God is able to give me much more than this." If you have a strong, rough, hard stick of responsibility, you must show it to me bursting out all over with the rich petals and the hanging clusters of the sovereignty of Divine grace. Aye, for I want you to mark well that here was a miracle within a miracle. The natural almond-branch never has upon it at one time buds, blossoms, and fruit. But I seem to be taught by this accumulation of successive life all at once on one stem that there is no element of mercy wanting in the code by which I am to be managed. But remember that if we deserve nothing but the rod, and yet if God never uses the rod save with the buds, the blossoms, and the fruit, "He may well record it against us if, either we

despise the chastening of the Lord, or faint when we are rebuked of Him." II. BUT NOW THE REAL AND ONLY PROPER COMMENTARY ON THE FACTS OF THE PENTATEUCH WILL BE FOUND IN THE DOCTRINES OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. Do you believe that all those lives would have been lost, and all that commotion would have been made about the prerogative of Aaron's priesthood, but for that other Priest on whom the whole world was to rely—the Priest for ever—"made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life"? It is not by one Scripture, it is by scores, that I find myself pointed, through that staff, to the real government of this world in the rod out of the stem of Jesse. "He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground, without form or comeliness." And yet, all the while, He was the "rod out of the stem of Jesse." And when I read, in the Book of Numbers, how the Hebrews rose up against Aaron and put him to shame, I can only take it for a foreshadowing of another rebellion, when they insulted another Sceptre, who was "despised and rejected of men." We preach to you Christ, a stumbling-block to the Jews. And scarcely can you wonder that so long as the rod was only the root out of a dry ground, the Son of the carpenter and the Friend of sinners, there was "no beauty in Him that they should desire Him." But that is not the staff with which, this day, God governs His Church. No, no! He hath declared that lowly peasant preacher to be "the Son of God with power, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." Ah, that night in which they concealed Aaron's rod in the tabernacle of witness, it was never less living, never less blossoming, than then. But it was not left in darkness, neither did it see corruption. And on the appointed morning men found it, marked by the choice of the Omnipotent with the buds, the blossoms, and the fruit. In like manner the coldest, darkest, least living period in Immanuel's career was when they hid Him, among all the other millions of the dead, in the tomb cut out of the rock in the garden of Joseph. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." He was raised up "a plant of renown." And from that glorious Easter morning the "rod out of the stem of Jesse" has been "the tree whose leaves are for the healing of the nations," and "filling the face of the world with fruit." Men can be governed by a Mediator and yet not perish. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." That is a rod, but "if any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father," that is, "Aaron's rod that budded"—the rod of the Priest. Reuben, Gad, and all the rest have rods. Christianity is not alone in the sternness of its government or the severity of its sanctions. But it is alone in telling me how I can receive remission of sins that are past, and how I can obtain the strongest of motives for a life of obedience in the time to come. (*H. Christopherson.*) *Aaron's rod blossoming and bearing fruit.*—I. AS THE PRIESTHOOD OF AARON WAS A TYPE OF THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST, THERE IS HERE A SUGGESTION OF FACTS WHICH MUST HAVE THEIR COUNTERPART IN CHRIST'S LIFE AND HISTORY. 1. The atonement and death of our Lord Jesus were matters of Divine appointment. The whole work of our salvation originated with God. 2. But more than this—which is the essential truth here enshrined—we see here that God often manifests Himself in unexpected forms of beauty and of grace. The dry rod blossomed and bare fruit. The powers of Divine salvation were enshrined in the person of the Carpenter of Nazareth. There was life for a dead world in the Cross and in the grave of the dead Christ. II. THERE ARE SUGGESTIONS HERE CONCERNING CHRISTIAN LIFE. 1. Christian life begins with God. 2. The Christian life manifests itself in unfavourable conditions. It is in human souls a power of active benevolence, or it is nothing at all. It takes hold of human misery with a healing hand, and it changes it into blessing. Where sin abounded there grace does much more abound. 3. There is beauty associated with the developments of Christian life and character. There is nothing half so winning as Christian grace. III. SUGGESTIONS IN RELATION TO THE GOSPEL MINISTRY. 1. There is a Divine designation of men to the highest service of the Church. 2. But what is the qualification of men thus sent? Evidently the possession of Divine life, the gift which is to be imparted to those needing it. To be a Christian teacher a man must be a Christian and must know the things of Christ. 3. How, then, are we to judge a man's Divine call and authority? Only and solely by the blossoms and fruit—by the spiritual results of his ministry. IV. LAST OF ALL, THERE ARE HERE SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING CHRISTIAN HUMILIATION. 1. The world has not known its best benefactors. It has always had a scornful word for the saintly and the true-hearted. It has always risen up in rebellion against the anointed of the Lord. 2. Here is a word of encouragement to all weak and mistrustful and diffident and self-emptied souls. "I am but a dry rod," says the old labourer in the

Master's vineyard, and the holy matron whose life has been careful and troubled about many things, but who has ever been anxious to honour and serve her dear Lord in lowliest ways and household duties. "I am but a dry rod," says the saint, waiting dismission to rest, who has not done what he would or been as useful as he desired and hoped and prayed to be. "I am but a dry rod," says one whose strength has been weakened by the way, and whose unfinished purposes lie sadly enough at his feet, fallen out of hands which could not longer hold them or fashion them into completeness. "We are but dry rods," say many earnest, anxious, longing souls who hardly dare to trust for the future, because so often when they would do good evil is present with them. We are not saved by trust in our own righteousness or by satisfaction with our own goodness and deeds. But God's grace is all-sufficient, and He can work miracles of beauty and fruitfulness where human might is feeblest, and self mistrust is greatest, and humility of spirit is deepest. (*W. H. Davison, D.D.*) *The Divine plan for vindicating the high priesthood of Aaron, and its moral teaching*.—I. THAT TRUE MINISTERS OF RELIGION ARE ELECTED BY GOD. II. IT IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE THAT MEN SHOULD KNOW THAT THEIR MINISTERS OF RELIGION ARE CALLED BY GOD. 1. In order that they may regard them with becoming respect. 2. In order that they may take heed to their message. III. THE VITALITY OF SIN IS OF DREADFUL TENACITY. "Many men's lips," says Trapp, "like rusty hinges, for want of the oil of grace and gladness, move not without murmuring and complaining." It is a thing of extreme difficulty to eradicate any evil disposition from the human heart. "For such is the habitual hardness of men's hearts, as neither ministry, nor misery, nor miracle, nor mercy can possibly mollify. Nothing can do it but an extraordinary touch from the hand of Heaven." IV. GOD IS ENGAGED IN ERADICATING SIN FROM HUMAN HEARTS. (*W. Jones.*) *Aaron's rod an illustration of the true Christian ministry*.—I. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY. 1. Life. 2. Beauty. 3. Fruitfulness. II. THE ORIGIN OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY. God's creation, and gift to the Church. III. THE INFLUENCE OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY. Abiding. (*Ibid.*) *The budded rod, a type of Christ*.—The rod in many graphic tints shows Jesus. The very name is caught by raptured prophets (Isa. xi. 1; Zech. vi. 12, 13). Thus faith gleans lessons from the very title—Rod. But the grand purport of the type is to reject all rivals. It sets Aaron alone upon the priestly seat. The parallel proclaims, that similarly Jesus is our only Priest. God calls, anoints, appoints, accepts, and ever hears Him; but Him alone. In His hands only do these functions live. Next, the constant luxuriance has a clear voice. In nature's field, buds, blossoms, fruit, so n wither. Not so this rod. Its verdure was for ever green; its fruit was ever ripe. Beside the ark it was reserved in never-fading beauty. Here is the ever-blooming Priesthood of our Lord (Psa. cx. 4; Heb. vii. 24). Mark, moreover, that types of Jesus often comprehend the Church. It is so with these rods. The twelve at first seem all alike. They are all sapless twigs. But suddenly one puts forth loveliness; while the others still remain worthless and withered. Here is a picture of God's dealings with a sin-slain race. Since Adam's fall, all are born lifeless branches of a withered stock. When any child of man arises from the death of sin, and blooms in grace, God has arisen with Divine almightiness. Believer, the budded rod gives another warning. It is a picture of luxuriance. Turn from it and look inward. Is your soul thus richly fertile? Instead of fruit, you often yield the thorn (John xv. 8). Whence is the fault? (John xv. 4). Perhaps your neglectful soul departs from Christ. Meditate in God's law day and night (Psa. i. 3). But if the budded rod rebukes the scanty fruit in the new-born soul, what is its voice to unregenerate worldlings? (Heb. vi. 8.) (*Dean Law.*) *The rod of Aaron*.—Buds are evidence of life. A nominal Christian is like a dead trunk, and he cannot bud unless the sap of Divine grace courses through him. Spiritual life is an attribute of the converted Christian. The spiritual life of a being is his presiding sentiment or disposition—the chief inspiration of his soul—that which gives motion and character to his mental and moral being. I. LIFE IS A RESISTLESS FORCE. The smallest blade of grass that raises its tiny head into light, or the feeblest insect that sports in the sunbeam, displays a force superior to that which governs the ocean or controls the stars. Man stands erect, the tree rises, and the bird soars, because of life. II. LIFE IS AN APPROPRIATING FORCE. Vegetable and animal existences have a power of appropriating to themselves all surrounding elements conducive to their well-being, just as the life of the plant converts the various gases around it into nutriment to promote its strength and development. Wherever there is true religion, there is a power to render all

external circumstances subservient to its own strength and growth; all things work together for its good. III. LIFE IS A PROPAGATING FORCE. It has "the seed in itself." Forests start from acorns, and boundless harvests from the solitary grain. It is said that the grateful Israelites, anxious to carry away a bud, a blossom, or almond as a memento of the occasion, the flowers and fruit on the rod were repeatedly and miraculously renewed for that purpose. Be that as it may, wherever there is religious life it will spread; it scatters broadcast the incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth for ever. IV. LIFE IS A BEAUTIFYING FORCE. There are two kinds of beauty—the sensational and the moral. Nature in her ten thousand forms of loveliness, and art in her exquisite expressions of taste, are ministries to the former, whilst spiritual truth, moral goodness, and the holiness of God address the latter. The one is the poetry of the eye and ear; the other, of the soul. The beauty that appeals to the religious nature of man is the beauty of holiness—the beauty of the Lord—the glory of God in His goodness. V. LIFE IS A FRUCTIFYING FORCE. The true Christian not only lives and unfolds a noble disposition, but is really useful. St. Paul speaks of "the fruit of the Spirit"—righteousness, goodness, truth. The first, as opposed to all injustice and dishonesty; the second, as opposed to the ten thousand forms of selfishness; the third, as opposed to all that is erroneous and false in the doctrines and theories of men. (*G. L. Saywell.*) *Aaron's rod*:—Here are three miracles in one:—1. That a dry rod—made of the almond tree—should bring forth buds in a moment. 2. That those buds should presently become blossoms and flowers. 3. That these should immediately become ripe fruit, and that all at once, or at least in a little space. Nature makes no such leaps. All this was supernatural to these ends. 1. For a testimony of God's calling Aaron to the priesthood. 2. For a type of Christ, the Branch (*Isa. xi. 1*). 3. For a figure of the fruitfulness of a gospel ministry. 4. For a lively representation of a glorious resurrection. (*G. Ness.*) *Lessons from the budding rod*:—A wonderful work of God, which sundry ways may profit us. 1. As first to consider that if the power of God can do this in a dry stick, cannot He make the barren woman to bare, and be a joyful mother of children? Can He not do whatsoever He will do? By this power the sea is dried, the rock gives water, the earth cleaveth under the feet of men, fire descends whose nature is to ascend, raiseth the dead, and calleth things that are not as if they were. In a word, He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, &c. 2. This rod is a notable type of Christ, His person and office. Of His person, in that He was born of the Virgin Mary, who, though He descended of the royal blood, yet was now poor and mean, as that royal race was brought exceeding low, nothing remaining but as it were a root only. Now the said Virgin flourisheth again as Aaron's rod did, and beareth such fruit as never woman bear. Of this speaks Isaiah the prophet, when he saith, "There shall come a rod forth of the stock of Jesse, and a graft shall grow out of his roots." Of His office both priestly and kingly. His priestly office is figured in that being offered upon the cross He was as Aaron's dried rod, or as the Psalm saith, "dried up like a potsherd." But when He rose again He became like Aaron's budding and fruit-bearing rod, bringing forth to man, believing on Him, remission of sins, righteousness, and eternal life. His kingly office, in that He governeth His Church with a rod or sceptre of righteousness, as it is in the Psalm: "The sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre." Which rod and sceptre is the preaching of the gospel, &c. 3. Again, it was a resemblance of true ministers, and of all faithful men and women, for none of all these ought to be dry and withered sticks, but bear and bring forth buds and fruit according to their places. 4. It is a shadow also of our resurrection by which we should grow green again, and flourish with a new and an eternal glory, having like dead seed lain in the ground, and we shall bring forth ripe almonds, that is, the praise of God's incomprehensible goodness to us for ever and ever. 5. It resembleth our reformation and amendment of life, for when our heart feelth what is amiss, this is as the bud; when it resolveth of a change and a future amendment, this is the blossom; and when it performeth the same by a new reformed life indeed, this is as the ripe almonds of Aaron's rod. (*Pp. Babington.*) *The priesthood divinely selected*:—What matchless wisdom shines in this arrangement! How completely is the matter taken out of man's hands and placed where alone it ought to be, namely, in the hands of the living God! It was not to be a man appointing himself, or a man appointing his fellow, but God appointing the man of His own selection. In a word, the question was to be definitively settled by God Himself, so that all murmurings might be silenced for ever, and no one be able again to charge God's high priest with taking too much

upon him. The human will had nothing whatever to do with this solemn matter. The twelve rods, all in a like condition, were laid up before the Lord; man retired and left God to act. There was no room, no opportunity, because there was no occasion for human management. In the profound retirement of the sanctuary, far away from all man's thinkings, was the grand question of priesthood settled by Divine decision; and, being thus settled, it could never again be raised. (*C. H. Mackintosh.*) *Aaron's fruitful rod* :—Striking and beautiful figure of Him who was “declared to be the Son of God with power by resurrection from the dead!” The twelve rods were all alike lifeless; but God, the living God, entered the scene, and, by that power peculiar to Himself, infused life into Aaron's rod, and brought it forth to view, bearing upon it the fragrant fruits of resurrection. Who could gainsay this? The rationalist may sneer at it, and raise a thousand questions. Faith gazes on that fruit-bearing rod, and sees in it a lovely figure of the new creation in the which all things are of God. Infidelity may argue on the ground of the apparent impossibility of a dry stick budding, blossoming, and bearing fruit in the course of one night. But to whom does it appear impossible? To the infidel, the rationalist, the sceptic. And why? Because he always shuts out God. Let us remember this. Infidelity invariably shuts out God. God can do as He pleases. The One who called worlds into existence could make a rod to bud, blossom, and bear fruit in a moment. Bring God in, and all is simple and plain as possible. Leave God out, and all is plunged in hopeless confusion. (*Ibid.*) *The rods contrasted* :—Ponder the difference between the rod of Moses and the rod of Aaron. We have seen the former doing its characteristic work in other days and amid other scenes. We have seen the land of Egypt trembling beneath the heavy strokes of that rod. Plague after plague fell upon that devoted scene in answer to that out-stretched rod. We have seen the waters of the sea divided in answer to that rod. In short, the rod of Moses was a rod of power, a rod of authority. But it could not avail to hush the murmurings of the children of Israel, nor yet to bring the people through the desert. Grace alone could do that; and we have the expression of pure grace—free, sovereign grace—in the budding of Aaron's rod. Nothing can be more forcible, nothing more lovely. That dry, dead stick was the apt figure of Israel's condition, and indeed of the condition of every one of us by nature. There was no sap, no life, no power. One might well say, “What good can ever come of it?” None whatever, had not grace come in and displayed its quickening power. So was it with Israel, in the wilderness; and so is it with us now. How were they to be led along from day to day? How were they to be sustained in all their weakness and need? How were they to be borne with in all their sin and folly? The answer is found in Aaron's budding rod. If the dry, dead stick was the expression of nature's barren and worthless condition, the buds, blossoms, and fruit set forth that living and life-giving grace and power of God on which was based the priestly ministry that alone could bear the congregation through the wilderness. Grace alone could answer the ten thousand necessities of the militant host. Power could not suffice. Authority could not avail. Priesthood alone could supply what was needed; and this priesthood was instituted on the foundation of that efficacious grace which could bring fruit out of a dry rod. Thus it was as to priesthood of old; and thus it is as to ministry now. All ministry in the Church of God is the fruit of Divine grace—the gift of Christ, the Church's Head. (*Ibid.*)

CHAPTER XVIII.

VER. 20. *Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land.—Are ministers debarred from owning property?*—No, this was a legal ceremony, and bindeth not now more than that prohibition to drink wine (*Lev. x. 9*), with such like. The yoke of the law is taken from us, and not to be reduced again. In the twenty-first chapter of Joshua, see what provision for cities and grounds for them and their cattle. The like in this Book of Numbers (*chap. xxxv.*; *Jer. xxxii. 8*). A purchase and land and title, descent and right, by kindred and blood. Origen mentioneth rents and revenues of the Church. Sabellicus writeth that Lucina, a noble and rich gentlewoman of Rome, made the Church her heir. Sozomen, how Constantine out

of the tribute of every city gave a portion to the Churches for maintenance of their ministers. Ambrose saith that the Church's lands paid tribute, therefore the Church had lands. Basil saith that bishops were rich and able to give to Churches. Nicophorus telleth how the worthy Empress Theodosius's wife adorned the bishop's house with all goodly furniture, and gave a yearly revenue. Thus have not all ages and persons dealt sparingly or grudgingly with their clergy; but both thought them worthy respect, and most worthily respected them in their maintenance and otherwise. (*Bp. Babington.*)

CHAPTER XIX.

VERS. 1-22. A red heifer without spot.—*The red heifer*:—I. It is undoubtedly true that even THE TRUE ISRAELITE, THE TRUE BELIEVER IN CHRIST, IS THE SUBJECT OF DAILY DEFILEMENT. 1. Some of our defilement arises from the fact that we do actually come into contact with sin, here imaged in the corruption of death. The best of men are men at the best, and while they are only men they will still sin. We are in close connection with sin, because sin is in ourselves. It has dyed us through and through, staining the very warp and woof of our nature, and until we lay aside these bodies and are admitted to the Church of the first-born above, we shall never cease very intimate connection with sin. 2. Moreover, we get defilement from companionship with sinners. This dusty world must leave some mark upon our white garments let us travel as carefully as we may. "I am black because the sun hath looked upon me," must ever be the confession of the bride of Christ. This world is full of the spiritually dead, and since we live we must be often rendered unclean among the sinful, and hence we need a daily cleansing to fit us for daily fellowship with a holy God. 3. One reason why we are so constantly defiled is our want of watchfulness. You will observe that everything in the tent of a dead man was defiled except vessels that were covered over. Any vessel which was left open was at once unclean. You and I ought to cover up our hearts from the contamination of sin. It were well for us if we kept our heart with all diligence, since out of it are the issues of life. 4. Sin is so desperately evil that the very slightest sin defiles it. He who touched a bone was unclean. It was not necessary to put your hand upon the clay-cold corpse to be defiled; the accidentally touching with the foot a bone carelessly thrown up by the grave-digger; even the touching it by the ploughman as he turned up his furrow, even this was sufficient to make him unclean. Sin is such an immeasurably vile thing that the slightest iniquity makes the Christian foul—a thought, an imagination, the glancing of an eye. 5. Sin, even when it is not seen, defiles, for a man was defiled who touched a grave. Oh, how many graves there are of sin—things that are fair to look upon, externally admirable and internally abominable! 6. The Jew was not only in danger of defilement in his tent and when he walked the roads, but he was in danger in the open fields; for you will observe, it says, that if he touched a body that had been slain in the open fields, or a bone, he should be unclean. Wherever you go you find sin! II. A PURIFICATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED. The ransomed Church of God need daily to be washed in the fountain, and the mercy is that the precious blood shall never lose its power, but its constant efficacy shall abide till they are, every one of them, "Saved to sin no more." 1. There is a propitiation provided for daily defilement, for first of all, if it were not so, how melancholy were your case and mine! 2. The Lord must have provided a daily cleansing for our daily defilement, for if not, where were His wisdom, where His love? He has provided for everything else. 3. The work of our Lord Jesus Christ assures us of this. What is there opened for the house of David, for sin, and for uncleanness? A cistern? A cistern that might be emptied, a waterpot, such as that which stood at Cana's marriage feast, and might be drained? No; there is a fountain open for sin and uncleanness. We wash, the fountain flows; we wash again, the fountain flows still. From the great depths of the deity of Christ, the eternal merit of His passion comes everlastingly welling up. Wash! wash! It is inexhaustible, for it is fountainfulness. 4. The work of the Holy Spirit also meets the case, for what is His business but constantly to take of the things of Christ and reveal them unto us; constantly to quicken, to enlighten, and to comfort? Why all this but because we

are constantly in need, perpetually being defiled, and therefore wanting perpetually to have the purification applied? 5. Facts show that there is a purification for present guilt. The saints of old fell into sin, but they did not remain there. III. THE RED HEIFER SETS FORTH IN A MOST ADMIRABLE MANNER THE DAILY PURIFICATION FOR DAILY SIN. 1. It was a heifer—an unusual thing for a sacrifice to be a female; and we scarcely know why it should be in this case, unless indeed, to make the substitution more evident. This red heifer stood for all the house of Israel—for the whole Church of God; and the Church is always looked upon and considered in Scripture as being the spouse—the bride—always feminine. Perhaps, to make the substitution obvious and complete, to show that this heifer stood in the stead and place of the whole seed of Israel, it was chosen rather than the customary bullock. 2. It was a red heifer—bringing to the mind of the Israelites the idea of blood, which was always associated with atonement and putting away of sin. Surely when we think of Christ, we always associate Him with the streaming gore when we are under a sense of sin. 3. It was a heifer without spot—denoting the perfection of Christ's character. 4. Observe that the red heifer was one whereon never came yoke. Perhaps this sets forth how willingly Christ came to die for us; not forced from heaven, but freely delivering Himself for us all. An interesting circumstance about this red heifer is that it was not provided by the priests; it was not provided out of the usual funds of the sanctuary, nor yet by the princes, nor by any one person. 5. The children of Israel provided it. What for? Why, that as they came out of their tents in the desert, or their houses in Jerusalem, and saw the priests leading the red heifer, every man, and every woman, and every child might say, "I have a share in that heifer, I have a share in that victim which is being led out of the city to be consumed." I wish—oh! I would to God I dare hope, that every man and every woman here could say, "I have a share in Jesus Christ," for that is the meaning of this national provision, to let us see how Christ shed His blood for all His people, and they have all a part and all an interest in Him. 6. As we noted what this victim was, there is yet to be observed what was done with it. Again, let me beg you to refer to your Bibles to see what became of this red heifer. (1) It was taken out of the camp. Herein it was a picture of Christ. That He might sanctify His people with His own blood, He suffered without the camp. Without the camp was the place of uncleanness. There the lepers dwelt; there every defiled person was put in quarantine. Jesus Christ must be numbered with the transgressors, and must suffer upon Mount Calvary, outside the city gates, upon that general Tyburn of criminals, "the place of a skull." The people of God are to be a separate people from all the rest of the world; they are not to be numbered with the dwellers in this world's city; they are to be strangers, and pilgrims, and sojourners, as all their fathers were. Therefore, Christ, to set them an example of separation, suffers Himself without the camp. (2) When taken without the camp, the red cow was slain. A dying Saviour that takes away our sin. We love Christ the risen one, we bless Christ the living, pleading intercessor, but after all the purification to your conscience and to mine comes from the bleeding sacrifice. See Him slain before our eyes. (3) When the heifer was slain, Eleazar dipped his finger in the blood as it flowed gurgling forth. He dipped his finger in the warm blood, and sprinkled it seven times before the door of the tabernacle. Seven is the number of perfection—to show that there was a perfect offering made by the sprinkling of the blood; even so, Jesus has perfectly presented His bloody sacrifice. Now mark, all this does not purify. I am not yet come to that point. Atonement precedes purification: Christ must die and offer Himself a victim, or else He cannot be the purifier. (4) When the whole was fully burnt, or while burning, we find the priest threw in cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet. What was this? According to Maimonides the cedar wood was taken in logs and bound round with hyssop, and then afterwards the whole enveloped in scarlet; so what was seen by the people was the scarlet which was at once the emblem of sin and its punishment—"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Everything you see still continues of the red colour, to set forth atonement for sin. Inside this scarlet there is the hyssop of faith, which gives efficacy to the offering in each individual, and still within this is the cedar wood that sent forth a sweet and fragrant smell, a perfect righteousness, giving acceptance to the whole. One delights to think of this in connection with Christ, that, as there is a daily witness of our defilement, so there is a daily imputation of His perfect righteousness to us, so that we stand every day accepted in the beloved by a daily imputation, by which not only is daily sin covered, but

daily righteousness given to us. (5) The pith of the matter lies in the last act, with the remains of the red cow. The cinders of the wood, the ashes of the bones, and dung, and flesh of the heifer, were all gathered together, and carried away and laid by in a clean place. According to the Jews there was not another heifer killed for this purpose for a thousand years. They say, but then we have no reason to believe them, that there have never been but nine red heifers offered at all; one in the days of Moses, the next in Ezra's time, and the other seven afterwards, and that when Messiah comes He is to offer the tenth, by which they let out the secret that they do look upon the Messiah as coming in His own time to complete the type. Our own belief is that a red heifer was always found when ashes were wanted, and as there were hundreds and thousands of persons defiling themselves, the place where the ashes were kept was much frequented, and much of the purifying matter required. The ashes were to be put into a vessel with running water, and the water was sprinkled over the unclean person who touched a body or a bone. By this process the ashes would require to be renewed much oftener than once in a thousand years, in order that every one might have his portion. Does not this storing up suggest that there is a store of merit in Christ Jesus? There was not only enough to make us free from sin by justification, but there is a store of merit laid up that daily defilement may be removed as often as it comes. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

The law of the red heifer applied:—The record of the law of the red heifer unfolds some traces of the manner, times, and substance of God's teaching in those days when the children of Israel "could not steadfastly look to the end."

1. His method was largely to use symbols, but not to the withholding of words. As objects lying in darkness cannot be presented but must be represented, so the truths suited to the manhood of our race were taught in that method to earlier generations.

2. The symbols of the Jewish worship were instituted at special times. God did not put it forth as a system. He did not place it as a full-grown tree in a wood. It is like a house to which have been added rooms and offices and hall as the growth of the family has demanded more scope in which to maintain new and higher thoughts. Wider views of what they need towards God cause Him to send out the beams of a light which is to dispel every doubt and fear.

I. LIABILITY FOR SOCIAL EVIL. What was there in the fact that a virulent disease had deprived so many of life, to produce a conviction that God cannot be approached for worship? Why should contact with a corpse, or entrance into a tent in which human life had ebbed away, or even a bone, or a grave trod upon, be as a barrier blocking up the way of the people to the sanctuary? Might the survivors not reason thus: "If those who have died did wrong we have been equally wrong; if we are not erased from the roll of the living there is, notwithstanding, an evil chargeable to us; partakers in a like offence we are worthy of a like condemnation; the evil has not exhausted itself on them, and we are liable in some form for their calamities; we cannot in this state of pollution go into the presence of God—is there not needed a purification from those social ills whose last and most affecting sign is death?"

II. THE IGNOMINY OF DEATH. The law recited in this chapter distinctly informs us that the presence of, or contact with, the signs of the death of mankind, separated from communion with God in His sanctuary. Would not thought be excited of some such form as this—"It is clear that there is no moral defilement in mere closeness to the signs of death, not to come into contact with them might be a sinful act—and yet we are treated, as to our standing before God, just as if we had been guilty of gross crimes. If God-appointed duties and circumstances render it unbecoming, and even impossible, that we should keep free from those relations to the dead mentioned by this law, why should we incur such a fearful result? Surely there must be some virulent spreading poison rankling in men's death. If by its presence or touch an impassable gulf at once sinks between God and us, what an offensive attitude against Him must death assume! Much more than mere sensational shrinking should creep over us before it. How can we avoid engraving deeply on our hearts the thought that it is dishonourable to die!" What is in death to make it so? This: that death is the seal of a Divine curse on man.

III. FREEDOM FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN IS BY APPLICATION OF A PREPARED REMEDY. The several parts in the process of preparing the water of cleansing bear emblems to show what God requires for freeing from sin. The slaying of the heifer and the sprinkling of its blood laid bare the foundation principles, that "it is the blood which maketh atonement for the soul"—that "without shedding of blood is no remission of sins." Everything that blocked up the way to the favour of the Lord is removed by the appointed sacrifices. He is reconcilable, and ready

to count the evils of the congregation satisfied for. Were the Israelites, then, entitled to say, "The offerings of atonement are made; sins are taken away; we are free from all further hindrances to acceptance; we need to care nothing more about what happens to us"? No. If acceptable offerings have been made for the people, yet events come to pass from which defilement will be caused to individuals, and, if this personal unfitness be not removed, perilous consequences must follow. Uncleanness incurred from the dead—the great sign of moral pollution—prevents approach to the holy Lord God. Separated from His presence on earth is a forecasting of an eternal separation—"that soul shall be cut off from Israel." But He has a remedy for this too. He provides means of purification, and thus of renewed access to Himself. Not only is the blood of bulls and of goats shed, but the ashes of a heifer is also to "sprinkle the unclean, in order to sanctify to the purifying of the flesh," and render fit for all the privileges of acceptable worship. IV. TO BE WITHOUT FITNESS FOR STANDING BEFORE GOD ACCEPTABLY IS INEXCUSABLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE. Once purified did not do away with the necessity of being purified again, when another defilement had been incurred. The new impurity must be removed by a new application, and the cleansing remedy was constantly available (vers. 9, 10). God keeps in store that odour which can counteract the poisoning air of death; that which will restore to health at all times and never lose its efficacy; that which can be applied for with the fullest confidence that it is provided against the renewed impediments to serving God acceptably, and warrants "boldness to enter into the holiest." What could justify neglect of this remedy? What evasion was possible when the uncleanness was so manifestly chargeable, and the provision for removing it so easily procurable? Must not every trifler, delayer, or neglecter be held guilty, without any palliation, of despising his Lord's grace and might? (D. G. Watt, M.A.) *The ordinance of the red heifer; a parable of the pollution of sin and the Divine method of cleansing therefrom*:—I. THE DEFILEN-
 NATURE OF SIN. 1. Sin is defiling in its nature. 2. The defiling power of sin is of great virulence. 3. The defiling power of sin is widespread. II. THE NECESSITY OF CLEANSING FROM SIN. III. THE PROVISION OF CLEANSING FROM SIN. 1. It is Divine in its origin. 2. It involves the sacrifice of the most perfect life. 3. It is invariable in its efficacy. IV. THE APPLICATION OF THE PROVISION FOR CLEANSING FROM SIN. (W. Jones.) *The red heifer an analogue of the Christ*:—I. IN ITS CHARACTER-
 ISTICS. 1. Fulness of life. 2. Perfection of life. II. IN THE TREATMENT TO WHICH IT WAS SUBJECTED. 1. The heifer was sacrificed. 2. The heifer was sacrificed "without the camp." III. IN THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH IT WAS DESIGNED. 1. The red heifer was intended to cleanse from ceremonial defilement. 2. The ashes of the heifer were efficacious for this purpose: "How much more shall the blood of Christ," &c. (Ibid.) *The ordinance of the red heifer*:—The special feature of the new ordinance is in the means taken to make one sacrifice available for an indefinite number of cases. This was done by the concentration, so to speak, of all the elements of the sacrifice in the ashes which were to be preserved. Here we have the explanation of the casting "into the midst of the burning of the heifer" of "cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet" (ver. 6). These represent the appliances for sprinkling: the hyssop stalk with scarlet wool wrapped round it, fastened on a piece of cedar wood, which was held in the hand. By the casting of these into the burning the idea of sprinkling was, as it were, perpetuated in the ashes which were the residuum of the whole. These ashes could of course be preserved and used for an indefinite time; and each time they were used, the ideas which had, so to speak, been burnt into them, would be impressed upon the minds and hearts of the devout. The ashes then represented the power of a past sacrifice; "even in its ashes live its former fires." The use of the running water with the ashes (ver. 17) has the same significance as in the ritual for the cleansing of the leper in Lev. xiv. In making application of the ordinance of the red heifer to ourselves, we find it specially instructive in regard to the restoration of that communion with God which ought to be the chief joy of the Christian, and which is too often broken by the contracting of stains, so difficult to avoid, with sin "reigning unto death" all around us. There are those who, under these circumstances, feel peculiarly discouraged. They have the impression that it must be exceedingly difficult to get back to their former position. They remember how long it took them at first to be reconciled to God; and they think how much more difficult it must be now that the evil has been allowed after the experience of God's saving grace. It seems a long and hard way back; and they have not courage to begin again. It is a mistake. The way back again is not long and hard. There are the ashes of the heifer and

the running water close at hand. There need be no delay, as if a new animal must be obtained, and brought to the priest, and killed at the altar, and so forth. There is a shorter way. Look back to the Sacrifice offered long ago once for all. There is the running water of the Word, which has in it, as it were in solution, the strong ashes of the Sacrifice. There for evermore is stored the virtue of that blood which "cleanseth from all sin." There need be no delay. For the ashes and the water, we have the Cross and the Word; and all that is wanted is the immediate use of God's "perpetual statute for purifying the unclean" (Heb. ix. 13, 14). (*J. M. Gibson, D.D.*) *The red heifer a wilderness type*:—A thoughtful student of Scripture would naturally feel disposed to inquire why it is that we get this type in Numbers and not in Leviticus. In the first seven chapters of the latter book we have a very elaborate statement of the doctrine of sacrifice; and yet we have no allusion whatever to the red heifer. Why is this? We believe it furnishes another striking illustration of the distinctive character of our book. The red heifer is, pre-eminently, a wilderness type. It was God's provision for defilements by the way, and it prefigures the death of Christ as a purification for sin, to meet our need in passing through a defiling world, home to our eternal rest above. When, with the eye of faith, we gaze upon the Lord Jesus, we not only see Him to be the spotless One, in His own holy Person, but also One who never bore the yoke of sin. He speaks of "My yoke" (Matt. xi. 29); it was the yoke of implicit subjection to the Father's will in all things. This was the only yoke He ever wore; and this yoke was never off, for one moment, during the entire of His spotless and perfect career—from the manger, where He lay a helpless babe, to the Cross, where He expired as a victim. But He wore no yoke of sin. Let this be distinctly understood. He went to the Cross to expiate our sins, to lay the groundwork of our perfect purification from all sin; but He did this as One who had never, at any time during His blessed life, worn the yoke of sin. He was "without sin"; and, as such, was perfectly fitted to the great and glorious work of expiation. "Wherein is no blemish, and whereon never came yoke." It is quite as needful to remember and weigh the force of the word "whereon," as of the word "wherein." Both expressions are designed by the Holy Ghost to set forth the perfection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who was not only internally spotless, but also externally free from every trace of sin. Neither in His Person, nor yet in His relationships, was He in any wise obnoxious to the claims of sin or death. He—adored for ever be His name!—entered into all the reality of our circumstances and condition, but in Him was no sin, and on Him no yoke of sin. (*C. H. Mackintosh.*)

CHAPTER XX.

. VER. 1. *The people abode in Kadesh.*—*The new departure*:—The fortieth year is now running its course. The time of the curse has nearly expired. And now preparations may be begun for entering a second time on the march to Canaan, where a new generation must vindicate the claim of Israel to be indeed "the hosts of the Lord," by taking possession of the land of promise. It was at Kadesh that the sentence had been pronounced which doomed their fathers to these dreary years of wandering. It is at Kadesh again that the camp is reorganised. It seems likely that during the interval there was no definite aim or object before the people, so that they moved about as suited their convenience or necessities, very much as the wandering tribes of the desert do still. This would lead to a relaxation of discipline and order in the camp, and more or less scattering of the people. Their unity was indeed to a certain extent kept up, and their marching orders given as of old, probably at long intervals. So at least we would infer from the itinerary in chap. xxxiii.; but there must have been no little disorganisation and dispersion, rendering it necessary that there should be a reassembling of the forces. For this purpose no place could be better or more appropriate than Kadesh, not only because it must have been so familiar to all, but also because, by making it their point of departure, they resumed the thread that had been broken by the unbelief of their fathers. The total loss of the long interval of time, moreover, is more distinctly marked by the gathering of the

people together at the old halting-place. There is a striking contrast between the new departure and the old. The first began with the numbering and mustering of the armed men, and all the bustle, activity, and energy of a youthful host setting out to victory. The second seems to have a much less hopeful beginning. The twentieth of Numbers is one of the saddest chapters in the book. It begins with the death of her who had been the leader in the song of victory on the shores of the Red Sea. It ends with the death of him who had so long been the honoured representative of Israel in the Holy and the Most Holy Place. And, between the two, we have the old story of murmuring on the part of the people, and mercy on the part of God, but with this sad addition, that Moses himself has a fall—a fall so serious that it leads to his own, as well as Aaron's, exclusion from the land of promise. It seems a hopeless beginning indeed. But was there not something hopeful in its very hopelessness? Recall that scene of wrestling at Peniel, when the patriarch Jacob gained the new name of Israel. How did he gain it? By his own strength? Nay. It was through weakness that he was made strong. It was when his power was utterly broken that his hope of victory began. This will illustrate what we mean when we say that there is something hopeful in the very hopelessness of this chapter. And this prepares the way for the great lesson of the next chapter, which may be expressed in the very words which follow the passage just quoted from the 146th Psalm, "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God." (*J. M. Gibson, D.D.*)

Miriam died there.—*The death of Miriam*:—I. DEATH TERMINATES THE MOST PROTRACTED LIFE. Miriam must have been about 130 years old when she died. II. DEATH TERMINATES THE MOST EVENTFUL LIFE. 1. The girl watching over the life of her infant brother (Exod. iii. 4-8). 2. The experienced woman sharing in the interest and action of the stirring events which led to the great emancipation from Egypt. 3. The prophetess leading the exultant songs and dances of a triumphant people (Exod. xv. 20, 21). 4. The envious woman aspiring after equality with, and speaking against her greater brother (chap. xii. 1, 2). 5. The guilty woman smitten with leprosy because of the sin (chap. xii. 9, 10). 6. The leprous woman healed in answer to the prayer of the brother whom she had spoken against (chap. xii. 13-15). The most stirring and eventful life is closed by death, as well as the quiet and monotonous one. III. DEATH TERMINATES THE MOST DISTINGUISHED LIFE. 1. Miriam was distinguished by her gifts. Prophetic gifts are ascribed to her. "Miriam, the prophetess," is her acknowledged title (Exod. xv. 20). 2. Miriam was distinguished by her position. IV. DEATH, BY REASON OF SIN, SOMETIMES TERMINATES LIFE EARLIER THAN IT OTHERWISE WOULD HAVE DONE. V. DEATH SOMETIMES TERMINATES LIFE WITH SUGGESTIONS OF A LIFE BEYOND. It was so in the case of Miriam. Can we think that the gifts with which she was so richly endowed, and the treasures of experience which in her long and eventful life she had gathered, were all lost at death? This would be in utter opposition to the analogy of the Divine arrangements in the universe. (*W. Jones.*)

Vers. 2-13. Neither is there any water to drink.—*The privations of man and the resources of God*:—I. THERE ARE PRIVATIONS IN THE PILGRIMAGE OF HUMAN LIFE. One man thinks that without health his life would be worthless; yet he has to submit to its loss for a time. To another man prosperity seems essential; to another, friendship, or some one friend or relative; yet of these they are sometimes deprived. Life, in our view, has many privations. This characteristic of our pilgrimage is for wise and gracious ends. Privation should remind us that we are pilgrims—incite us to confide in God—and discipline our spirits into patience and power. II. THE PRIVATIONS IN THE PILGRIMAGE OF LIFE SOMETIMES DEVELOP THE EVIL TENDENCIES OF HUMAN NATURE. This murmuring of the Israelites was—1. Unreasonable. 2. Cruel. 3. Ungrateful. 4. Degraded. 5. Audaciously wicked. III. THE PRIVATIONS IN THE PILGRIMAGE OF LIFE, AND THE EVILS WHICH ARE SOMETIMES OCCASIONED BY THEM, IMPEL THE GOOD TO SEEK HELP OF GOD. 1. Consciousness of need. 2. Faith in the sufficiency of the Divine help. 3. Faith in the efficacy of prayer to obtain the Divine help. 4. Faith in the efficacy of unspoken prayer. IV. THE PRIVATIONS IN THE PILGRIMAGE OF LIFE ARE SOMETIMES REMOVED IN ANSWER TO THE PRAYER OF THE GOOD. (*W. Jones.*)

No water:—I. THE PLACE HERE SPOKEN OF. The wilderness. The people were led thither—1. For discipline. 2. For solitude. 3. For proving. How sadly they failed. II. THE WANT. Water—1. A necessity for sustenance. 2. A necessity for purity. 3. A want which they were unable to provide for themselves. III. THE PEOPLE'S

ACTION. "They murmured." An act natural to the human heart; but very sinful and foolish—1. Because it distrusted God. 2. Because it did no good. 3. Because it made themselves more wretched and miserable still. **IV. THE PROVISION MADE.** 1. Unexpected in its source. 2. Unexpected in the manner of its attainment. 3. Unexpected in quantity. **V. THE INSTRUCTION AFFORDED.** That rock was a type of Christ. He was appointed of God, stricken of man, means of salvation to those appointed to die, &c. (*Preacher's Analyst.*) *The muddy bottom:*—The heart of man is like a pool of standing water. Look at it on a summer's day, when not a breeze ruffles the surface, not a bird flies over to cast its light shadow on its face. It is so clear, so bright, you may see your own image reflected there. Now cast a stone to the bottom, and watch the effect. The dark mud is rising all around, rank weeds are floating up which you never saw before; the whole pool is in a state of motion, and hardly a drop of water has escaped the foul pollution. Look at your heart when all outward things go well. No vexing, crossing care mars its tranquil calm, and you think you see the image of Jesus reflected there. It is so long since sin has molested you that you think it has left you quite, and that all is sure within. Now let a sudden offence come, an unkind, undeserved rebuke; let pride be touched, or self-will roused, and presently all is lost. Like the waves of an angry sea, the poor mind is tossed from thought to thought, and finds no rest. The mud is raised from the bottom, and not one corner of that wretched heart is free from its polluting influence. All gentle, soothing thoughts are gone, and one by one the dark weeds are floating on the surface. (*Quiet Thoughts for Quiet Hours.*) **Speak ye unto the rock.**—*God's use of insufficient means:*—He told Moses to speak to the rock, and it should give forth water. On a former occasion he was to smite the rock; now he was only to speak to it. If there were any unbelievers in the camp they might mock at this command, and say, How is it possible to get water out of a rock? let us rather dig wells, if haply we may find water. And truly to the eye and ear of sense these observations might appear plausible. Now God's way of bringing sinners to glory is just the same. The life of the Christian is a life of faith throughout. The appointed means have no inherent efficacy. God tries the faith of His people; disappoint it He never will. He has provided strength equal to their day, yet will He send it in such a way as to make them feel their utter helplessness. They see most of God's love and gracious designs, and have most peace and comfort in their afflictions, who live most by faith. (*George Breay, B.A.*) **With his rod he smote the rock twice.**—*The smitten rock:*—I. **THE SINFUL ATTITUDE OF THE PEOPLE.** They were discontented, enraged, and faithless. And so men grow discontented and cry out against God, as if trouble were the only experience they knew anything about—the most unhappy and morbid state of mind into which any Christian believer can come. It is strange also how, when one thing goes wrong with us, everything seems to be awry. The children of Israel were thirsty, and therefore they complained that the desert of Zin was not the garden of the Lord, full of all manner of fruits. Put a red lamp into a mass of shrubbery, and leaf and blossom are forthwith dyed an angry crimson. Thwart some cherished purpose of a man, and immediately everything takes on the colour of his disappointment. Society is disintegrating, the Church is going to destruction, life is a vale of tears. Nothing but immovable faith in God can save us from this wretched partialism. II. **THE MERCIFUL ATTITUDE OF GOD.** What might He be expected to do under the circumstances? What wonder if He should say, "It is of no use to be patient any longer. This people will not have Me for their Ruler. Let them perish." But that is not God's way. He recognises the weakness of men, pities their sufferings, relieves their wants, and so gives the people another chance to understand Him. And how often that ancient wonder is wrought anew in human experience! Some critical event occurs in our history, which for a time at least shatters our faith in the Divine goodness and justice, well established as that faith ought to be when we remember the general tenor of our life, and God, instead of flaming out against our inconstancy and leaving us to our own devices, makes that very event the occasion of a new and gracious revelation of His love. With time and pains we arrange some well-compacted plan, on whose success it seems to us all our good fortune depends, and it thrives for a while; but suddenly all things are against us, and our hopes are wrecked, and we grow bitter and rebellious, and then God uses that very disaster to teach us juster views of life and to create in us a nobler frame of mind, and develop a broader manhood, and we have a nobler ambition and are better equipped than ever before. And then from the barren rock of bereavement

God brings streams of refreshing. The remaining members of the household are more closely welded together, a more tender sympathy with each other springs up, the unseen life becomes a grander reality, and, as in the flush of the sunset that follows the storm, we forget the fury of the blast in the glory of the transfigured heavens, so men and women, in the chastened spirit that results from trials, and in the light of new and larger hopes which have been kiudled, bear glad testimony: "It is good for us that we have been afflicted." III. THE UNWARRANTABLE ATTITUDE OF MOSES AND AARON. They were angry with the people and called them hard names, addressing them as "rebels." They spoke as if they were the chief agents of the miracle which God wrought. "Hear now, ye rebels," they said to the people, "must we fetch you water out of this rock?" So far as their words went, they were taking upon themselves the glory which belonged to God alone. Then, too, they were not satisfied with the Divine directions. For these assumptions Moses and Aaron were rebuked on the spot, and a sentence of punishment pronounced upon them. There is important practical instruction here for those who teach or preach God's Word to sinful men. It is not to be done in a self-satisfied way, with the assumption of superior sanctity. Neither are we to take credit to ourselves for good results which may follow our administration of Divine truth. It is not our wisdom or eloquence, but the Word of God which is "quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword." Humility and self-distrust are eminently becoming in those who undertake to do God's work of influencing men for good. (*E. S. Atwood.*) *Moses at the rock*:—1. Did you ever hear people cry out, "I wish I were dead"? That is what the Israelites said—"Would God we had died!" These wishes were hasty, and as insincere as hasty. No doubt those people would flee from death with terror at the first sign of his approach. It has been well said that "a discontented heart makes a reckless tongue." 2. Now we come to Moses' sin. He did not attend carefully to God's Word, nor obey it, because he was angry. Notice his bitter words. Let us beware of the sin of anger. Look at the fifth of Galatians, and it tells you that "wrath" is one of the "lusts of the flesh." In Proverbs we are told that "he that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." Why is a person who conquers himself better than a great general who takes a city? There are three reasons. (1) He is a greater hero; he does a more difficult thing. (2) Because it leaves a happier feeling behind. (3) It pleases God. The more you conquer your sins, the more you will be growing like Christ. Do you know heaven is full of conquerors? And Rev. xii. 11 tells us how they conquered: "They overcame by the blood of the Lamb." (*British Weekly Pulpit.*) *The scene at Meribah*:—This is a memorable incident in the Jews' history, rich in warning to us at this day. Moses had failed in his duty towards God in three particulars. 1. He had failed in strict obedience. 2. He had shown temper, used hard language. 3. He had taken to himself the credit of supplying the Israelites with water. I. THE DANGER OF DEPARTING, IN THE LEAST JOT OR TITTLE, FROM ANY LAW OF GOD. II. THE IMMENSE IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO TEMPERATE SPEECH, the necessity of keeping a check on temper and not letting ourselves be moved to hot and angry words. III. This scene is further useful as CARRYING OUR THOUGHTS UPWARDS to Him who is the source of all our hopes, the nourishment of our soul, the very life of our religion, the Lord Jesus Christ. (*R. D. B. Ravensley, M.A.*) *Moses striking the rock*:—The Biblical writers are charmingly candid. Do they speak of other men's faults? They take care also to record their own. Reputation is sacrificed on the altar of truth; the unselfish lawgiver informs us of his own transgression and its terrible penalty. What may we learn from his sin? I. WE MUST NOT SEEK RIGHT ENDS BY WRONG MEANS. Here Moses erred. How often has his sin been repeated! Look at Caiaphas. He says in reference to the Saviour. "It is expedient that one man die, and not that the whole nation should perish." The latter part of the sentence is admirable, the former is atrocious. . . . Error should be opposed; we ought to stop its progress as quickly as possible—but by persuasion, not persecution. II. WE MUST BEWARE OF DOING MORE THAN GOD COMMANDS. There are two opposite ways of sinning—by defect, and by excess. A child who, in adding up a sum, makes it "come to too much," blunders as completely as if he made it "come to too little." And such a form of wrong-doing is possible spiritually. We as much violate our duty as "followers of God," if we get ahead of our Guide, as though we lagged so far behind that we could no longer see Him or tread in His steps. Are we not all, for instance, harsher in our judgments, more exacting, more stringent and rigorous in our demands, than He is

whom we profess to follow; and is not this to go before God, and to go before Him not to prepare His way, but to scare men from His presence? III. PRECEDENT IS A PERILOUS GUIDE. Moses had struck the rock before by God's command, and probably he argued that what was right then could not be wrong now. But let us remember, that "circumstances alter cases." A thing which is wise for one time may be folly for another. (*T. R. Stevenson.*) *The sin of Moses*:—I. WHAT THERE WAS SINFUL IN MOSES. 1. Disobedience to the Divine command. 2. Immoderate heat and passion. 3. Unbelief. 4. It was all publicly done, and so the more dishonouring to God. II. WHAT WE MAY LEARN FROM THIS TRAGIC STORY. 1. What a holy and jealous God He is with whom we have to do. 2. The Lord's children need not think it strange if they get abundance to exercise that grace in which they most excel. 3. Let us not be surprised to see or hear the saints failing even in the exercise of that grace wherein they most excel. 4. Never think yourselves secure from falling till ye be at the end of your race. 5. What need we have to guard constantly our unruly passions, and put a bridle on our lips. 6. Though God pardons the iniquity of His servants, yet He will take vengeance on their inventions (*Psa. xcix. 8*). 7. If God punishes His children thus for falling into the snare, how shall they escape who lay the snare for them? 8. Observe the ingenuousness of the penmen of the Holy Scripture—Moses records his own fault. (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *Sin in the child of God*:—I. VERY PAINFUL TO GOD. II. MOST INEXCUSABLE. III. MOST DISASTROUS IN ITS RESULTS. IV. VERY CERTAIN OF PUNISHMENT. Let this incident—1. Make God's people more watchful. 2. Lead others to ponder their ways; for if God visits His own children for sin, *a fortiori*, He will not let the wicked escape. 3. Let none forget that God can forgive sin—all sin—through Jesus Christ. (*David Lloyd.*) *The sins of holy men, and their punishment*:—The sin of Moses and Aaron seems to have included—1. Want of faith. 2. Irritation of spirit. 3. Departure from Divine directions. 4. Assumption of power. 5. The publicity of the whole. I. THE LIABILITY OF THE GOOD TO SIN. II. THE DANGER OF GOOD MEN FAILING IN THOSE EXCELLENCES WHICH MOST DISTINGUISH THEM. III. THE IMPARTIALITY OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT. IV. THE GREAT GUILT OF THOSE WHO BY THEIR WICKEDNESS OCCASION SIN IN THE GOOD. V. THE MEANS WHICH GOD USES TO DETER MEN FROM SIN. Divine judgments, expostulations with the sinner, encouragements and aids to obedience, are all so employed. By the voice of history, by the law from Sinai, by the gospel of His Son, by the Cross of Jesus Christ, by the influences of His Spirit, God is ever crying to the sinner, "Oh! do not this abominable thing that I hate." Let Christians guard against temptation; let them cultivate a watchful and prayerful spirit. (*W. Jones.*) *How it went ill with Moses*:—It was but one act, one little act, but it blighted the fair flower of a noble life, and shut the one soul, whose faith had sustained the responsibilities of the Exodus with unflinching fortitude, from the reward which seemed so nearly within its grasp. I. HOW IT BEFELL. The demand of the people on the water supply at Kadesh was so great that the streams were drained, whereupon there broke out again that spirit of murmuring and complaint which had cursed the former generation, and was now reproduced in their children. They professed to wish that they had died in the plague that Aaron's censer had stayed. They accused the brothers of malicious designs to effect the destruction of the whole assembly by thirst. It could hardly have been otherwise than that he should feel strongly provoked. However, he resumed his old position, prostrating himself at the door of the tent of meeting until the growing light that welled forth from the Secret Place indicated that the Divine answer was near. Moses was bidden, though he took the rod, not to use it, but to speak to the rock with a certainty that the accents of his voice, smiting on its flinty face, would have as much effect as ever the rod had had previously, and would be followed by a rush of crystal water. Yes, when God is with you, words are equivalent to rods. Rods are well enough to use at the commencement of faith's nurture, and when its strength is small, but they may be laid aside without hesitation in the later stages of the education of the soul. For as faith grows, the mere machinery and apparatus it employs becomes ever less, and its miracles are wrought with the slightest possible introduction of the material. Moses might have entered into these thoughts of God in quieter moments, but just now he was irritated, indignant, and hot with disappointment and anger. The people did not suffer through their leader's sin. The waters gushed from out the rock as plentifully as they would have done if the Divine injunctions had been precisely complied with. Man's unbelief does not make the faith of God of none

effect; though we believe not, yet He remaineth faithful, He cannot deny Himself, or desert the people of His choice. II. THE PRINCIPLE THAT UNDERLAY THE DIVINE DECISION. 1. There was distinct disobedience. No doubt was possible about the Divine command, and it had been distinctly infringed. This could not be tolerated in one who was set to lead and teach the people. God is sanctified whenever we put an inviolable fence around Himself and His words; treating them as unquestionable and decisive; obeying them with instant and utter loyalty. It is a solemn question for us all whether we are sufficiently accurate in our obedience. 2. There was unbelief. It was as if he had felt that a word was not enough. As if there must be something more of human might and instrumentality. He did not realise how small an act on his part was sufficient to open the sluice-gates of Omnipotence. It reminds us of the shattering of the Hell-Gate Rock at the entrance of New York Harbour. The touching of a tiny button by a little child set in action the train of gunpowder by which that vast obstruction was blasted to atoms, and heaved for all time out of the path of the ships. A touch is enough to set Omnipotence in action. It is very wonderful to hear God say to Moses, "Ye believed not in Me." Was not this the man by whose faith the plagues of Egypt had fallen on that unhappy land, and the Red Sea had cleft its waters? Had the wanderings impaired that mighty soul, and robbed it of its olden strength, and left it like any other? Surely something of this sort must have happened. One act could only have wrought such havoc by being the symptom of some unsuspected wrong beneath. Oaks do not fall beneath a single storm, unless they have become rotten at their heart. Let us watch and pray, lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief, lest we depart in our most secret thought from simple faith in the living God. Let us especially set a watch at our strongest point. But how much there is of this reliance on the rod in all Christian endeavour! Some special method has been owned of God in times past, in the conversion of the unsaved or in the edification of God's people, and we instantly regard it as a kind of fetish. We try to meet new conditions by bringing out the rod and using it as of yore. It is a profound mistake. God never repeats Himself. He suits novel instrumentalities to new emergencies. Where a rod was needful once He sees that a word is better now. What does it matter if the means He ordains appear to our judgment inferior to those which He commanded once? This is no business of ours. 3. There was the spoiling of the type. That Rock was Christ, from whose heart, smitten in death on Calvary, the river of water of life has flowed to make glad the city of God, and to transform deserts into Edens. But death came to Him and can come to Him but once. "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." It is clear that for the completeness of the likeness between substance and shadow, the rock should have been stricken but once. Instead of that it was smitten at the beginning and at the close of the desert march. But this was a misrepresentation of an eternal fact, and the perpetrator of the heedless act of iconoclasm must suffer the extreme penalty, even as Uzzah died for trying to steady the swaying ark. III. THE IRREVOCABLENESS OF THE DIVINE DECISIONS. Moses drank very deeply of the bitter cup of disappointment. And no patriot ever yearned for fatherland as Moses to tread that blessed soil. With all the earnestness that he had used to plead for the people, he now pleaded for himself. But it was not to be. The Lord said unto him, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto Me of this matter. The sin was forgiven, but its consequences were allowed to work out to their sorrowful issue. There are experiences with us all in which God forgives our sin, but takes vengeance on our inventions. We reap as we have sown. We suffer where we have sinned. At such times our prayer is not literally answered. By the voice of His Spirit, by a spiritual instinct, we become conscious that it is useless to pray further. But, oh! that God would undertake the keeping of our souls, else, when we least expect it, we may be overtaken by some sudden temptation, which befalling us in the middle, or towards the close of our career, may blight our hopes, tarnish our fair name, bring dishonour to Him, and rob our life of the worthy capstone of its edifice. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*)

Vers. 14-21. Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border.—A reasonable request, and an ungenerous refusal:—I. A REASONABLE REQUEST. 1. Reasonable in itself. 2. Urged by forcible reasons. (1) The relationship existing between them, "Thy brother Israel." (2) The sufferings which the Israelites had endured. (3) The mercies which God had shown to Israel. The blessings which God had bestowed upon them should have been viewed—(a) As an indication that it was His will that others should aid them. (b) As an example to encourage others

to aid them. (c) As an indication of His favour towards them, which suggested that it was to the interest of others to aid them. It is perilous to resist those whom God defends; it is prudent to further their designs, &c. (4) Because Israel would guarantee Edom against any loss. II. AN UNGENEROUS REFUSAL. This refusal of the Edomites probably arose from—1. Fear that if they complied with the request of the Israelites the result might be injurious to them. 2. Envy at the growing power of Israel. 3. Remembrance of the ancient injury inflicted by Jacob upon Esau. (1) Learn that no alienation is so wide and bitter as that between brethren or other near relations. (2) Where such alienation exists, let us seek to bring about reconciliation—a complete healing of the breach. (3) Cultivate brotherly kindness. (4) Respect the rights of others even when the assertion of those rights is carried to an extreme. “Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border; wherefore Israel turned away from him.” (*W. Jones.*) *Retribution consummated*:—Who pleads? Israel. To whom is the plea addressed? To a brother. How did the word “brother” come into the narrative? It came historically. We have here Jacob and Esau. Edom is the name by which Esau was known. Wherever we find the term Edom, our minds may instantly associate with it the history of Esau, and an action of Divine sovereignty in relation to that history. Jacob supplanted Esau, ran away in the night-time, met his brother at some distance of time afterwards, the brothers fell upon one another’s necks, kissed each other, and seemed to sink the infinite outrage in grateful and perpetual oblivion. Nothing of the kind. Life cannot be managed thus; things do not lie between man and man only. Herein is the difference between crime and sin. So Jacob and Esau come face to face throughout the ages. The supplanter cannot sponge out his miserable cunning and selfish deceit and unpardonable fraud. Jacob the individual dies, Esau the individual dies: but Jacob and Esau, as representing a great controversy, can never die: to the end of the chapter Edom will encounter Israel with deep and lasting animosity. So Esau had his turn. We pitied the hairy man as he was driven away portionless, without a blessing, his great heart full of sin no doubt, quivering with agony, for which there was no adequate expression in words; but in so far as he has been wronged he will see satisfaction and himself be satisfied. The supplanted family had a land when the supplanter’s descendants had only a wilderness. This is the law of Providence. Events are not measured within the compasses of the little day. The cunning man or the strong man, the oppressor or the wrong-doer, may have his victory to-day, and may smile upon it, and regard it with complacency, and receive the incense of adulation from persons who only see between sunrise and sundown. But the heavens are against him; he has to encounter the eternities, long time after his victory shall wither, and in his descendants his humiliation shall be consummated. (*J. Parker, D.D.*)

Ver. 17. We will go by the king’s highway.—*The king’s highway*:—They meant that, however tempting was the fruit of the fields, however fascinating the byways, however inviting the sparkling water in the wells might seem, they would keep to the hard-beaten thoroughfares that ran north and south of the country, by which travellers had passed in ages now gone by. Now, without doubt, such words have a spiritual and typical meaning. I. OF THE NATION at large. Israel pronounced them unanimously as a nation, and we, as the English nation, may well re-echo them after all these hundreds of years. And it is well for us to bear in mind that “whole nations” must stand up for God as well as individuals. Numbers can never make a sin less grievous. II. They are words, too, that may be hoped for from the mouth of THE CHURCH. God is essentially a God of law and order. The Church must go by the King’s highway. III. But as with the nation and with the Church, so with THE INDIVIDUAL, they are words that are appropriate in the mouth—1. Of the young Christian, starting off on life’s journey, just going into the world. Happy, aye thrice happy, he who, with dogged determination, says, “We will go by the King’s highway.” 2. So, too, they are suited especially to the penitent. He, too, must look into the future and resolve “to go by the King’s highway.” And here we must pause to notice that the individual highway consists—(1) Of morals. We must take the code of God’s commandments, showing our duty to God and man, and walk in the way of God’s commandments. (2) Of faith. Ethics alone are not sufficient; there must be a firm basis of Church doctrine, something on which the soul of man may lean for comfort in distress. IV. Lastly, we are not alone in our efforts to go by the King’s highway; we are cheered by THE EXAMPLES OF ALL THE SAINTS whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of

Life. In conclusion, I would add that the King's highway leads to the city of the Great King. (*W. O. Parish.*)

Vers. 25-29. Aaron died there in the top of the mount.—*The death of Aaron* :—The first and most superficial aspect of death is that it is the close of an earthly career. What kind of career was it that was brought to a close when Aaron died? First of all, there could be no question as to its prominence. Aaron shares with Moses, though as a subordinate, the glory of having ruled and shaped the course and conduct of his countrymen at a time of unexampled difficulty, at a time pregnant with the highest consequences to the religious future of the world. But Aaron's place in religious history is more distinctly measured if we consider the great office to which he was called. He was the first of a long line of men who were at the head of what was for ages the only true religion in the world. He was the first high priest of the chosen people. Office, however, and position is one thing; character is another; and, if it is here that we find a great difference between the brothers, we must first of all remind ourselves that Aaron is called in Scripture "the saint of the Lord." He must have had a great background of those high qualities which go to make up the saintly character, if he also had defects which are recorded for our instruction. Aaron was morally a weak man. He had no such grasp of principle as would enable him to hold out against strong pressure. Nor is it inconsistent with this that Aaron could display obstinate self-assertion on inopportune occasions, as when he joined his sister Miriam in murmuring against Moses. This is exactly what weak people do; they give way when true loyalty to duty would teach them to resist, and then, haunted by the notion that they are weak, or at least that the world will think them so, they indulge in some form of spasmodic self-assertion which may remind us of the ungainly efforts that invalids will sometimes make to show that they are not quite so ill as their friends may think them. And now the end had come. Moses and Aaron both knew that Aaron would die. It may have been that some hitherto unsuspected disease had shown itself in the constitution of the old man; it may have been, as has been suggested, that a sand-storm in the Arabah had withered up his decaying vitality. That Aaron would die might have been known from observation, as God often speaks to us through the wonted changes of the world of nature. But Aaron and Moses also knew *why* Aaron was to die, and why on Mount Hor. If we knew enough, we should all of us know that there is a reason in the Divine mind for the hour at which, as for the means by which, every man and woman departs this life. We all are interested in ascertaining as exactly as we can the physical reason of the death of those relations whom God in His providence removes from our sight; but behind the physical reason there is a moral reason, if we could only know it; and we may say, with confidence, that, in the eyes of God, who is the perfect moral Being, the moral reason accounts for much more than the physical. Sometimes a life is prolonged to do one single piece of work which no other would do as well, and as soon as that work is done, that life is withdrawn. Sometimes a life is cut short because it has forfeited the particular privilege which an extension of some months or even weeks would bring to it, and this was the case of Aaron—"And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in Mount Hor, by the coast of the land of Edom, saying Aaron shall be gathered to his people, for he shall not enter into the land which I have given to the children of Israel because he rebelled against My word at the waters of Meribah." Aaron's share in the sin of Meribah was due to the same want of firmness which, as we have seen, was a feature in his character. The sin of Meribah was, in the first instance, the sin of Moses, when the people murmured at the want of water, and Moses, worried no doubt by their perverseness, in the very act of relieving them betrayed, both by what he said and by what he did, a temper unworthy of his high office, so that he did not sanctify the Lord God in the eyes of the people. As a later Psalmist reflects—"The people angered God at the waters of strife, so that He punished Moses for their sakes, because that they provoked his spirit so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips." As for Aaron, he not only did not check Moses, he acquiesced in what he must have known to be dishonourable to God; and this in a man with his spiritual responsibilities was a grave failure of duty. Much more, Moses had forfeited that high privilege, but then the work which Moses had to do in the world was not yet done. But Aaron's appointed work was done, and there was no reason for delaying his summons. And here we are led to reflect on a subject which too often escapes notice. Many men, probably the majority of those who do not incur eternal loss, yet do from some flaw in the character, from some warp or weakness in the will,

fall, more or less, greatly short of what they might have been, of what natural powers and spiritual endowments and religious and other opportunities might have made them even in this world; and if here, then also hereafter, even if by God's mercy in Christ we reach it, it may be to fill a lower rather than what might have been a higher place, but for some compliance with what conscience condemned, but for some act or some omission which has left upon the soul and the character that lasting impress which survives death. There is much to be noticed in the account of the close of Aaron's life, but nothing is more worthy of our notice than his deliberate preparation for it. He did not let death come on him, he went to meet it. The last scene was as much a matter of duty, a matter of business, as his consecration to the high priesthood. . . . Ah! death, surely, is like a mountain-top for the survey which it gives to life, and the deserts through which we have wandered, and the barriers which have checked our progress, and the hopes, bright or dim, which have cheered us on, and the feebleness and the fear of man, and the self-seeking, and the petty vanity (if nothing worse) which have spoiled so much that God meant for Himself, stand out in clear outlines above the haze of the distant past. Doubtless it was with Aaron as with any man who retains, along with a conscience that has not been seared, the free exercise of the mind's powers in those last solemn moments which precede the greatest of all changes—doubtless, it was with him as with others upon whom their position and work in life have entailed great responsibility for the real and lasting happiness or misery of their fellow men. At such times the simply conventional no longer satisfies. At such times standards of conduct that are natural to human sanction are seen to be no longer applicable, the mental eye sees through and beyond the phrases which inclination or passion have hitherto interposed between it and the past. It sees the past more nearly, not as self-love has wished it to be, but as it was. At such times the higher a man's place in the government, or the social fabric of the state, or in the hierarchy of the Church, the more sincerely must he breathe the prayer, "If Thou, Lord, shouldst be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it?" But time was passing. The last moments were now at hand; so Moses, acting, as we know, under Divine instructions, stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son. There was, no doubt, a two-fold motive in this act of Moses. It showed, first of all, that the office of the high priesthood did not depend on the life of any single man, that God was watching over the religious interests of His people, that His gifts and calling were, as the apostle says, "without repentance, without recall," and that He provides for the due transmission of those spiritual faculties which have been given that they may sustain the higher life of man from age to age. But it also reminded Aaron personally of the solemn truth of the utter solitariness of the soul in death. Not more than any other man can a high priest retain the outward position, the valued symbols, of his great office. He, too, shall carry nothing away with him when he dieth, neither shall his pomp follow him. Death strips us of everything save that which, so far as we know, is by God's appointment strictly indestructible. Our undying personality and that type of character which acts and habits and the use or misuse of the supernatural grace of God have, for good or for evil, wrought into its very texture—this is indeed for ever ours. All else is, like the sacerdotal robes of Aaron, to be abandoned, at the place where, at the moment when, we lie down to die. It was all over. Aaron had closed his eyes, and Moses buried him where at this day a Moslem shrine, constructed out of the ruins of some earlier and finer edifice, still bears his name. It was all over, and like a procession returning from a funeral without the one object which had formed its chiefest interest, Moses and Eleazar, so we are told, came down from the mount. What were their thoughts about Aaron? Where was he now? "Aaron," so runs the phrase of Moses, "was gathered to his people." What does the phrase mean? It is used alike of Moses and Aaron. Does it describe only the interment of their bodies? But in either case their bodies rested at a distance from their people, in a foreign soil. Surely, it points to a world in which the bygone generations of men still live, a world of the existence of which God's ancient people were well assured, though they knew much less of it than we. That world beyond the grave is no doubt presented with different degrees of clearness in the successive ages of Old Testament history. The age of the patriarchs is marked by strong and distinct faith in it. In the days and teaching of Moses it is more kept in the background, probably because the imagination of Israel was still haunted by the imagery of the underworld of the dead, as the Egyptians had conceived of it. In Job and some of the Psalms it is the subject sometimes of anxious discussion, sometimes of

strong and undoubting faith. In the prophets it comes prominently forward as the promised Messiah, heralded not merely as an earthly ruler, but as a deliverer from the consequences of sin. In Ezekiel and Daniel we already meet with the resurrection of the body; in the writers after the captivity this doctrine goes hand in hand with a distinct faith in the immortality of the soul. We cannot doubt that, as Moses and Eleazar made their way down the western side of the mount on which Aaron was left, their thoughts were not only or chiefly centred on the tomb which enclosed his body; they followed him into the assembly of the spirits of the dead, they followed him with their sympathies, with their hopes, their prayers, even though around that world on which he had entered there still hung a veil for them which has been, through Christ's mercy, removed for us. The Old Testament is sometimes a foreshadowing of the new, sometimes its foil. If Aaron was stripped of his sacerdotal robes on the eve of his death, Jesus our Lord was never more a priest than when He hung upon His Cross, and offered Himself as a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. If Aaron's dust still lies somewhere among the rocks of Hor, awaiting the summons to judgment, Jesus is indeed risen from the dead, "and become the first fruits of them that slept," nay, He has already, He has here, "brought life and immortality to light" through His gospel, He has taught us that there is a life which through His grace we may live, and the beauty of which our hearts cannot but own, while yet that life does but mock us if it ends at death, if it does not last, if it does not expand, hereafter. He has shown us how this life may be, if at present it is not ours, and in possessing it we are already and most assuredly "more than conquerors" of death "through Him that loved us." (*Canon Liddon.*)

The death of Aaron:—I. THE DEATH OF AARON. 1. As a consequence of sin. 2. By the appointment of God. 3. The death of Aaron was his introduction to life and to congenial society. II. THE APPOINTMENT OF AARON'S SUCCESSOR. 1. Kindness to Aaron. It assured him—(1) That his office would be filled, his work carried on, &c. (2) That his office would be filled by his own son; that the high priesthood would continue in his own family. 2. A guarantee of the continuance of the Church of God. III. THE MOURNING BECAUSE OF AARON'S DEATH. 1. The worth of faithful ministers. 2. The appreciation of blessings when they are withdrawn from us, which were not valued when they were ours. Lessons: 1. The universality of death. 2. The imperfection of the Aaronic priesthood. 3. The perfection of the priesthood of Christ (Heb. vii. 22-28; viii. 6; ix. 23-28; x. 10-14). (*W. Jones.*)

Death of Aaron:—I. THE TIME. In the fortieth year of the wanderings. 1. A very important year in the history of Israel. Year of death also of Miriam and of Moses. Dates that mark formation of new or severance of old friendships, always important. 2. In about the 123-4 year of Aaron's life. A long and eventful life. And yet, though his life was long—(1) His death was hastened by sin. How often should we discover this to be the case if we knew all! Religion the best life-preserver. (2) His death overtook him in the midst of work. II. THE WARNING. Many pass away without any warning. Duty of being always ready. In this case, a solemn intimation that the time appointed had come. It was kindly framed. "Gathered unto his people." An old man's best friends—his people—are mostly in the better world. Aaron invited to join his people; the great ones amongst whom he ranked. III. THE PLACE. A mountain. Reminds us that the good man in death is in death lifted up above the world; and that, as Aaron at that time, he dies in view of the Church below and the Church above. Israel around, and the promised land before him. IV. THE CIRCUMSTANCES. Toilsomely and calmly ascends the hill to be gathered to his fathers. The old man climbing the last of life's hills. The last stage a rugged one. V. THE CHARACTERISTICS. A death—1. Hastened by sin. 2. Closing all earthly offices and distinctions. 3. Heralded by solemn intimations. 4. Sweetened by presence of friends. Learn—1. A good man in dying is gathered to his people. 2. Seek to live on the borders of heaven that we may die in view of the promised land. 3. Endeavour to do what we have to do while it is called to-day. (*J. C. Gray.*)

The death of Aaron:—I. We may learn a salutary lesson from the death of Aaron in ITS MERELY LITERAL BEARING. Aaron, the high priest, had to ascend Mount Hor clad in his priestly robes of office; but he must be stripped of them there, because he must die there. He could not carry his dignity or the emblems of it into the next world. He must lay them down at the grave's brink. There is nothing which the world gives that men can carry with them when death lays hold of them. Even all which outwardly pertains to spiritual dignity, and which brings men into relation with things that are

imperishable and eternal, must be left behind, and the individual man, as God's accountable creature, must appear before his Maker in judgment. There is one thing imperishable and one dignity which even death cannot tarnish. The imperishable thing is the life which the Spirit of God imparts to the soul, and which connects the soul with God. The deathless dignity is that of being children of God. II. Aaron must be stripped of his robes, and HIS SON CLAD WITH THEM IN HIS STEAD. This reminds us that while the priests under the law were not suffered to continue by reason of death, yet the office of the priesthood did not lapse. Aaron's robes were not buried with him. His successor was provided. Yet the very thought that he needed a successor, that the office must be transmitted from one to another, leads us to think of the contrast which the apostle draws between the priests under the law and Him who abideth always. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. (*A. B. Davidson.*)

The good and faithful servant:—I. THE COMMON DESTINY OF MAN. "Aaron," says God, "shall be gathered to his people." Death is spoken of here, not as a strange event, not as something peculiar to Aaron, but as something that had happened to Aaron's people, and would happen to all generations. Oh, the teeming myriads that preceded us, that carried on the works, the commerce, and the reforms of our world; all these, so far as the body is concerned—all dust! II. THE RIGOROUSNESS OF MORAL LAW. Here is a man who had struggled hard for many years in the wilderness, a man filled with high hopes, with glowing enthusiasm, a man who was approaching the goal, approaching the Canaan; and yet mark how, because of one sin, he dies, and never reaches that blessed spot. However distinguished a man may be for his excellences, however high he may be in the Church of God, his sin shall not go unpunished. III. THE TERMINATION OF LIFE IN THE MIDST OF LABOUR. We nearly all die with our work unfinished. The farmer dies when he has only half ploughed his field; the merchant dies in the midst of some commercial enterprise to which he has committed himself; the statesman dies with some great political measure, perhaps, heavy on his hands; the minister dies with some schemes of thought in his brain unwrought out, some plans of usefulness undeveloped. That to me is a profound mystery. I should have thought that a man who had in his brain a great purpose to serve his race, to promote the truth, and to extend the kingdom of Christ, would have his life preserved, that he might realise his purpose. But it is not so. O God! we are not surprised when an old tree, though prolific in its day, dies, for it dies by the law of decay; nor are we astonished that an unfruitful tree should be cut down, for it is a cumberer of the ground; but we are astonished that a tree, with its branches full of sap, with its boughs laden with fruit, with thousands reposing under its shadow, should be struck with a thunderbolt from heaven. Thy path, O God, is "in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known." IV. GOD'S AGENCY IN MAN'S DISSOLUTION. Why did Aaron die? He was not worn out with age. He was as vigorous, perhaps, at that moment, as anybody here. Not because there was disease rankling in his system, not because there was any external violence applied to him. Why, then, did he die? The Great One determines that he shall die, and he dies. And this, I take it, is always the philosophy of a man's death. We may ascribe it to that disease, to this accident, to this chance, to this occurrence; but philosophy, the Bible, and reason all say, "man dies because the Great One has determined that he should die." If you will ascertain the term of a creature's existence, you can only do it accurately by ascertaining the will of the great God concerning his existence. The constitution has nothing whatever to do with the question. If God determines it, the most robust dies in a moment. V. THE PROMPTITUDE WITH WHICH PROVIDENCE SUPPLIES THE PLACES OF THE DEAD. Aaron must die, but there is Eleazar standing by his side ready to step into his place. This is the order of Providence. A merchant dies, and another man stands by his side ready to carry on his business. A lawyer dies, and there is a man standing by his side ready in a moment to step into the place he occupied. A statesman dies, and Providence has a man exactly fitted for his position. Oh, how this encourages my faith in the progress of Divine truth in this world! I see missionaries die in the field, and ministers die in the Church; I see authors die who are moving the minds of men, and influencing them for their highest good; and sometimes I feel, now, surely there must be a pause. But no, there is another minister ready to take the departed minister's place. You labour, and other men enter into your labours; and when the mystery of godliness shall be finished, I believe the great series of workers will meet and mingle and rejoice together in the presence of the great common Father of us all. But whilst this encourages our faith, it is certainly humbling to our pride. The world can do

without thee. Thou art but a blade in the field; the landscape will bloom without thee. Thou art but a drop in the ocean; the mighty billows will not miss thee. Thou art not at all important. VI. THE TRIAL OF HUMAN FRIENDSHIPS. Moses and Eleazar were very closely related to Aaron. Moses was more than a brother to Aaron. There was a spiritual kindredship between them. There were mental affinities and spiritual affections. Their hearts were welded together by tender feelings and associations, and yet part they must. Oh! I ask the question, leaving you to answer it. Can it be that the great God of love, who has made us to love, and who has disposed us to give our affections to certain men and persons, can it be that He intended that our love should lash within us such storms, and produce so many tears that we have to shed almost daily? The philosophy is here—these friendships are to be renewed. These losses and tears are only a passing storm, clearing the heavens. There is to be a renewal of real spiritual friendship. Eleazar, Moses, thou shalt meet that man whom thou art burying on Mount Hor again! The time is hastening on when a re-union shall take place, and separation never. After all, the separation which takes place in the death of true Christian friends is more in form than in reality—more an appearance than a fact. I have the idea that in truth we become more really friends by the death separation. Death cannot destroy our loving memories of them. Death does not kill—nay, it seems but to intensify our affections. Death seems to bring those who are gone more closely and more vitally into contact with our hearts. Death, I say, does not effect a real separation. Love photographs them in the soul. VII. THE PAINFUL RECOGNITION BY SOCIETY OF ITS GREATEST LOSSES. The people mourned for Aaron thirty days. Well might they mourn. If we cannot weep over great and true hearts, over what can we weep? Good men are as fountains welling up in the desert through which you are passing; they are lights in abounding darkness; they are salt that counteracts our tendency to corruption. Thank God for good men! But the Christian minister is the best of all men, and his loss is the greatest of all losses. I know of no man who is rendering such a service to society and to humanity as he! Such was Aaron. He was a minister of God. He had to go in between the corrupt Jews and the Infinite, and to entreat upon their behalf; and more than once did his prayers avert the threatened judgment. Aaron was more than that; he was a speaker, an orator. His words sometimes fell as a thunder-peal upon the proud heart of Egypt's monarch; but they came down with rays of light, and as the gentle dew, upon the people of Israel. I can fancy Aaron talking to the people about God, about the coming Christianity, about the new dispensation, about the world to come. But he dies; and they mourn. I do not wonder at that. I should have been surprised if they had not wept when they knew and felt, We shall see Aaron no more; he has ministered to us for many years, he has given consolation to our old men, a word of advice to the young men, and has talked to the children—and we shall see Aaron no more. (*D. Thomas.*) *The comforts of Aaron's death:*—The comforts of Aaron's death here are these: The Lord appoints it so, and His will, as it is ever good, so should it ever be our content. Secondly, his son succeedeth him in his place, a great comfort. Thirdly, he shall be freed from all his toil, from all his grief, from an unkind people. Now shall he rest and have peace, and all grief from his heart, all tears from his eyes wiped quite away. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours, and their works follow them." Let it be a comfort to all, and by name to God's ministers, that faithfully and zealously have watched over their flock, and have reaped but wrong and oppression. God hath His sweet time to release us, and to gather us to our people as He here did Aaron. He will care for our children as here for Aaron's, and put them in some place or other after us for their good in His great mercy, if we commend them to Him. Our labours shall not be lost with Him that rewardeth a cup of cold water. If we have "sowed in tears we shall reap in joy." Earth's woe shall be changed to heaven's bliss, and happy shall we be. Go on in comfort, be faithful unto the end, the Lord shall give us a crown of life. (*Bp. Babington.*) *Divestiture and investiture—ministerial succession:*—1. In these calm, almost cold, words, is told all that man is to know of an event full of interest, mystery, and awe. In that year 1452 (as chronologers say) before the Christian era, a life is brought to its close, which, but for one other life beside it, would have been unique in wonder. That old man who has gone up into Mount Hor, under Divine direction, to die, is God's high priest; the first of a long line, the only line that God ever consecrated to stand between Himself and His chosen people, in the things of religion and the soul, until He should at last come, who is

the End of all Revelation and the Antitype of all Priesthood. 2. Aaron is shut out from Canaan for a fault, for a sin. Judged as man judges, it was a little sin. It was not the greatest of the sins even of this one life. But with God "great" and "little" have no place in the estimate of transgression. 3. The lesson of severity lies on the surface of the record. 4. There is here also the lesson of love. See how God chastens without disowning. 5. There is also the lesson of death. It is the fashion to say that the language of the Old Testament is cheerless about death. I cannot see it. These deaths for small sins seem to be eloquent as to the insignificance of death. They seem to say, "The life that is seen is but a fragment of the whole life." 6. Nothing is more pathetic in Holy Scripture than that selflessness which God requires in His servants; that absorption of natural feeling in the One higher, which is the perfection of self-control and the self-forgetfulness. Aaron himself had been enabled to rise to it, when he saw his two sons cut off before him, forbidden to mourn, forbidden to bury them. And now it is his brother's turn to take his part in bearing the burden which God's ministry lays upon them that are privileged to exercise it. Now he must strip his dying brother of the beautiful and costly vestments of his priesthood. He must array in them a new priest, who is to carry on God's work before a younger generation. And when the sad and solemn office is ended, he must turn back, with that other, to the thoughts and acts of the living, till he also shall have finished his course, and be ready to rejoin his brother in the Paradise of the just made perfect. 7. There are some forms of ministration which suggest succession. Those garments which are emblematical of office—the judge's ermine, worn only on the judgment-seat; the bishop's lawn, put on with prayer and benediction, in the midst of the ceremony of his consecration—speak for themselves as to the disrobing. The wearer had a predecessor, shall have a successor in that ministry. He is but the life-holder: less than the life-holder, for decay of strength may further abridge the tenure of that charge, towards God and man, which the vestment of office typifies. There must be that stripping of which the text speaks; that putting off that another may put on. Let him live in the foreview of that day. 8. Behold in one view the littleness and the greatness of man. The littleness in space and time. One generation goeth, and another cometh. Earth is a speck, and time a moment. But, view life as a trust—view office, view work, view character, view being, as a priesthood—and all is ennobled, all consecrated. Say to yourself, I am God's priest—I wear His ephod and His crown, and the inscription on that crown is, "Holiness unto the Lord"—then you are great; great above kings, who know not a hereafter; great above hierarchies which would shine in God's stead; your light is God's light, and the world shall be the brighter for it. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *The sin of Moses, and the death of Aaron.*—I. FAITH IN GOD IS THE REGULATING GRACE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. So long as that is preserved, it will keep all other principles of our nature in restraint; but when that is lost, the brake is removed from the wheel, and everything goes wrong. The loss of faith leads to panic, and panic is utterly inconsistent with self-control. If we wish to overcome ourselves, then the victory is to be won through faith in God. Mere watchfulness will not suffice; but we must cultivate that confidence in God which believes that all things work together for good to them who love Him; which realises the universality of His providential administration as including the minutest as well as the vastest concerns of life; and which has the unwavering assurance that we shall enter at last upon our heavenly inheritance. II. HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO BE ALWAYS READY FOR DEATH. The death of Aaron was not altogether without warning, but in some sense it may be regarded as sudden. There were no premonitions of it in his bodily frame, else he could not have ascended Mount Hor; and when God's command came, it might take him, and probably did take him, by surprise. Yet he was not appalled, for he believed God, and that kept him in perfect peace. "What, sir," said a domestic servant, who was sweeping her doorstep, to young Spencer, of Liverpool, as he was hastening by, "is your opinion of sudden death?" He paused a moment; then saying, "Sudden death to the Christian is sudden glory," he hurried on; and in less than an hour afterward he was drowned while bathing in the Mersey. III. THE PLACE AND POWER OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE ONWARD PROGRESS OF HUMAN SOCIETY. 1. Ministers and people die, but the Church abides, and carries still forward its beneficent work. 2. We are the heirs of all the preceding generations; and if we act well our part, we shall leave something additional of our own behind us, which shall enrich those who shall come after us. The tabernacle service went on without Aaron, it is true; but if

Aaron had not gone before him, Eleazar would not have entered upon such a sphere of usefulness as that which now opened before him. If there had been no Bacon, there might have been no Newton; and if there had been no Newton, our modern philosophers would not have been what they are. 3. What, then, is the lesson of all this? It is that each of us shall strive to do his utmost in the work to which God has called him, so that we may leave a higher platform for those who shall come after us. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *Aaron's death*:—Aaron went up to die. Some die in seclusion and unknown; yet it matters not where the saints depart, whether on a mount or in a vale, though, as a typical character, this circumstance seemed to indicate the way of the “spirit, which riseth upwards,” and the destiny of our whole humanity. To him dying was but ascending; and it will be so to all the Lord’s people. The great Representative and Forerunner of the Church died on one mount, and ascended from another. Had not some great truth thereby been to be expressed, Aaron had not attired himself for death as though to enter the holy of holies. It can signify but little what he puts on who is about to lie down in the shroud of dissolution. Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return, said Job. Oh! how do some long for evening, to undress! “not that they would be unclothed, but clothed upon with their house which is from above.” Yet the priest did not die, but the man. The transfer was made in life: the robes were taken from him while living, and not when dead. The Church was no moment without a priest and an offering. (*W. Seaton.*)

CHAPTER XXI.

VERS. 4-9. Much discouraged because of the way.—*On the discouragements of pious men*:—I. I shall point out THE DISCOURAGEMENTS IN THE WAY; and, in doing this, I SHALL KEEP MY EYE ON THE PILGRIMAGE OF THE PEOPLE WHO WERE ORIGINALLY REFERRED TO IN THE TEXT, and thence draw my chief illustrations. 1. The way is circuitous, and therefore discouraging. Souls that are brought to Jesus, and delivered from the slavery of sin and the curse of the law, in their first ardour overlook trials, and think of nothing but enjoyments; they do not anticipate the fightings and fears that are the portion of God’s Israel. After a time, through want of watchfulness and care, the love of the espousals begins to decline, the world regains a degree of influence, the Spirit is grieved, and they fear God has become their enemy; they seem to themselves to go backward, and, indeed, are in danger of doing so, if they neglect to watch and pray; and much time is spent in mourning, retracing the ground that has been lost. 2. The way is through a wilderness, and is, on that account, discouraging. In a spiritual sense, this world is a wilderness. (1) It has no natural tendency to nourish the spiritual life; nothing is derived from it of that kind: though spiritual blessings are enjoyed in it. (2) Again, there is much intricacy in the Christian’s pilgrimage. There were no paths in the wilderness; the Israelites could not have explored their way but by the direction of the pillar of fire and of the cloud: so the Christian often knows not how to explore his path. 3. The way lies through a hostile country, and is, therefore, discouraging. The Christian soon learns that he has to fight against “principalities, and powers, and spiritual wickedness.” The flesh is also an enemy. The Christian experiences the workings of carnality, a hankering after that which is evil, and to which he may have been addicted; as the Israelites after “the onions and garlic of Egypt.” 4. The false steps that are taken in the pilgrimage, and the consequent displeasure of God, are discouraging: there are so many errors and iniquities for which the Lord chastens His people, though He pardons sin as to its eternal consequences. 5. The total defection of men from the path is a great discouragement to those who still continue in the way. 6. The length of the way is discouraging. Though human life is short in itself, yet to our limited conception it appears long; especially when passed in suffering and pain. In protracted afflictions is seen the patience of the saints. Those saints, who endure in private, though unnoticed by their neighbours, and perhaps unknown, are the bravest heroes of the Christian camp. II. I shall now DIRECT YOU TO SOME CONSIDERATIONS TO REMOVE YOUR DISCOURAGEMENTS. 1. Remember, the way you are in, believer, is “a right way,” notwithstanding all that has been said.

Infinite Wisdom has ordained it: and if you reach the end, you will be well repaid for all your toil, and will admire the whole of the pilgrimage: no sorrow will appear to have been too heavy; no path too gloomy. 2. Another encouragement is, that God is with His people in the way. If He leads into the wilderness, He "speaks comfortably"; He spreads a table there, "and His banner over us is love." 3. Remember there is no other way that leads to heaven. You cannot reconcile the service of sin and the world with the hope of heaven and the enjoyment of everlasting life in that holy state, and in the presence of the holy God. Will you, then, forego the hope of Canaan; as you must when you yield to sin, when you give yourselves to the world? (*R. Hall, M.A.*)

Discouraged because of the way:—I. THESE WORDS ARE APPLICABLE TO GOD'S PEOPLE NOW. II. THESE WORDS ARE APPLICABLE TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN GOD'S PEOPLE. Do not many go back spiritually? Some tire of God's service and abandon it. III. THESE WORDS ARE APPLICABLE TO THOSE WHO NEITHER HAVE BEEN NOR ARE GOD'S PEOPLE. "Not far from the kingdom of God"—yet not happy. (*T. R. Stevenson.*)

Discouraged:—Perhaps the way was rough and uneven, or foul and dirty; or it fretted them to go so far about, and that they were not permitted to force their passage through the Edomites' country. Those that are of a fretful discontented spirit will always find something or other to make them uneasy. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*)

Discouragements:—Discouragement is a kind of middle feeling: it is, therefore, all the more difficult to treat. It does not go so far down as cowardice, and has hardly any relation to a sense of triumph or oversufficiency of strength; but the point of feeling lies between, deepening rather towards the lower than turning itself sunnily towards the higher. When that feeling takes possession of a man, the man may easily become the prey of well-nigh incurable dejection. There are necessary discouragements. How awful it would be if some men were never discouraged!—they could not bear themselves, and they could not act a beneficent part towards other people. It is well, therefore, for the strongest man occasionally to be set back half-a-day's travelling and have to begin to-morrow morning at the point where he was yesterday morning. It is of God that the strongest man should sometimes have to sit down and take his breath. Seeing such a man tired, even but for one hour, poor weak pilgrims may say, If he, the man of herculean strength, must pause awhile, it is hardly to be wondered at that we poor weaklings should now and then want to sit down and look round and recover our wasted energy. We must not forget that a good many discouragements are of a merely physical kind. We do not consider the relation between temperament and religion as we ought to consider it. Be rational in your inquiry into the origin of your discouragement, and be a wise man in the treatment of the disease. There are exaggerated discouragements. Some men have a gift of seeing darkness. They do not know that there are two twilights—the twilight of morning, and the twilight of evening; they have only one twilight, and that is the shady precursor of darkness. We have read of a man who always said there was a lion in the way. He had a wonderful eye for seeing lions. Nobody could persuade him that he did not see a ravenous beast within fifty yards of the field he intended to plough. This is an awful condition under which to live the day of human life. But that lion is real to him. Why should we say roughly, There is no lion—and treat the man as if he were insane? To him, in his diseased condition of mind, there is a lion. We must ply him with reason softly expressed, with sayings without bitterness; we must perform before him the miracle of going through the very lion he thought was in the way; and thus, by stooping to him and accommodating ourselves to him, without roughness or brusqueness, or tyranny of manner and feeling, must bring him round to the persuasion that he must have been mistaken. Discouragement does not end in itself. The discouraged man is in a condition to receive any enemy, any temptation, any suggestion that will even for a moment rid him of his intolerable pressure. Through the gate of discouragement the enemy wanders at will. Therefore be tender with the discouraged. Some men cannot stop up all the night of discouragement by themselves; but if you would sit up with them, if you would trim the light and feed the fire, and say they might rely upon your presence through one whole night at least, they might get an hour's rest, and in the morning bless you with revived energy for your solicitude and attendance. Discouragements try the quality of men. You cannot tell what some men are when their places of business are thronged from morning until night, and when they are spending the whole of their time in receiving money. You might regard them as really very interesting characters; you might

be tempted to think you would like to live with them: they are so radiant, so agreeable. If you could come when business is slack, when there are no clients, customers, patrons, or supporters to be seen, you would not know the lovely angels, you would not recognise the persons whom you thought so delightful. What is the cure of this awful disease of discouragement? The very first condition of being able to treat discouragement with real efficiency is to show that we know its nature, that we ourselves have wandered through its darkness, and that we have for the sufferer a most manly and tender sympathy. Then are there no encouragements to be recollected in the time of our dejection? Do the clouds really obliterate the stars, or only conceal them? The discouragements can be numbered,—can the encouragements be reckoned—encouragements of a commercial, educational, social, relative kind—encouragements in the matter of health or spirits or family delights? (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Fleshpots or manna*:—To all of us constantly a choice is offered; a choice of many names but of one significance, a choice which may be described variously, but which is fundamentally the same. It is the choice between law and licence; between pleasure and duty; between the flesh and the spirit; between God and Satan; between worldly life and heavenly hope; between intemperate sensualism and sober chastity. In some form or other—great or small—this choice comes daily and almost hourly to all of us. But sometimes the choice comes to us in life in a concentrated, in almost a final form. The supreme hour, the distinct crisis, comes to us, at which we must definitely and consciously turn either to the right hand or to the left; must decide for ourselves between the God of our fathers and the strange gods of those among whom we dwell. It comes to all; it comes at any period of life; but perhaps in this deliberate form it comes mostly in youth. The boy at school has to make up his mind whether he will attach himself to bad companions and to forbidden pleasures, or fling them off with all the strength of his soul, and all the aid which he can win from prayer. The young woman has to decide between dress, self-assertion, the acceptance of flattery, the assertion of a spurious independence, the listening to the serpent tempter, the long gaze on the forbidden fruit; or, on the other hand, modesty, readiness to be guided, respect for the warnings of experience, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price. The youth of the poorer classes has to make up his mind whether he shall be a loungee at the tavern or a worshipper in the Church. But though the choice is in any case infinitely momentous, it is not necessarily final. There is, indeed, in human lives a law of habit, a law of continuity, which ever tends to make it final. Even the choice itself depends on all that has gone before it. The present decision is swayed by all the past. The shadow must have been creeping on the dial-plate before its black line marks the hour; and the clock must have accomplished its thousands upon thousands of tiny tickings before the great hammer-stroke can clash out that it is noon. And when the choice has been made, when we are definitely on the side of Satan or of God, the powers that make it the Armageddon field of their mighty battle do not at once or for ever leave it utterly alone. Now, the Israelites, of whom we read in this chapter, had long ago made their choice, and, by God's grace, chosen right. They had been in the land of Egypt—the house of bondage. Coarse plenty, ignoble servitude, the starving of every noble impulse, the death of the soul amidst the comforts of the body—this had been their too common lot. Fish and melons and leeks and cucumbers and garlic and the rich water of the Nile—these they had enjoyed in plenty, and to marry and bring up a low race of ignoble slaves. Myriads in this great city are at this moment in the land of Egypt, in the house of bondage; having plenty to eat and drink and live on—able to gratify every sense and sate every passion; but yet slaves—slaves of society, slaves of self, slaves of Satan, slaves of their own worst passions. And from this base, low life of serfdom and gluttony, one man awoke the Israelites. At first they misunderstood, rejected, vilified him. But at last God's breath breathed upon these slain, and they began to live. The voice of Moses roused them. He thrilled them with the electric shock of liberty. So, making their brave choice, the children of Israel left the land of Egypt, the house of bondage, and went forth into the barren wilderness. It was a harder life, but a life oh, how far more noble! There was no garlic or leeks, but they were free. They were not fattening in fleshly comfort, but the great winds of God could now blow on the uplifted foreheads of men who were no longer slaves. The type of it all was this: there were no fleshpots, but there was manna; so men did eat angels' food for He sent them meat enough. And what a difference between the

two kinds of food! Not the coarse, steaming messes, reeking and rich, meet for the sensual and full-fed slave; but a honeydew which lay on the ground—small, white, glistening, exquisite, delicate as the food of heaven, but evanescent as morning tears. And in the first flush of freedom, in the purple dawn of enthusiasm, it was delightful, it was ennobling, to gather and to feed upon these pearls of the morning, which renewed the body, but did not encarnalise the soul. And they had made their choice, and they were glad like men. But then, as they plodded along the barren wastes, like the dead levels of middle life, came to them the temptations and the reactions of which I have spoken, and the necessity of renewing their choice, and not being discontented with it—of abiding by it, and not repenting it. The gross spell and baleful sorcery of Egypt returned like a wave of mud over the souls which God had freed. The spirit of the slave remained in them; the reek of Egypt's fleshpots seemed to float back to their nostrils; they loathed the light "bread"; they sighed for the onions and the garlic and the rich water and fat, sluggish fields. Has not this sketch taught its own lessons? The one special lesson which I want to bring home is the training of the spiritual sense—the danger to the table of the Lord from the table of devils; the guilt of dallying with old temptations, the peril of furtive glances towards the doomed forsaken city. When God's children hunger for righteousness, He impearls for them the ground with the manna-dews of heaven; but when they lust for quails, their food breeds plague and is loathsome unto them; and fiery serpents sting the diseased appetite, and at last the gorged prodigal craves, and craves vainly, for the husks of swine. For instance, God fills the world with water. The great sea rolls its pure, fresh waves of violet, and the tropic sun evaporates them, and they are distilled in the sweet laboratory of the air, and the wings of the winds winnow them free from the impurity amid the soft clouds of heaven, and they steal down in dew and silver rain, and hang like diamonds on the grass, and gladden the green leaves, and slide softly into the bosom of the rose, and bubbling through the mountain turf become the rivulets and the rivers, and are the sweet, wholesome, natural drink of man and beast, and we thank God for these springs of health, and disease drinks and sleeps. Now to the simple, natural, noble taste this is enough; it delights us. But man has distilled, in his laboratories, a fiery flaming spirit; and what sweetness is there in water to the coarsened palate, the inflamed thirst, the parched tongue, the vitiated taste, the depraved craving of the drunkard? How can that which is sweet and simple and natural contend with the brutifying attraction of oily, maddening, scorching drams, which poison and degrade? The taste for spiritual things—for the things of God—is like the pure, cool, delicious wholesome, but unmaddening, unseducing water; the drink of Egypt, the drink of the house of bondage, and the drink of the drunkard, and the madman, and the sensualist, is like that dissolved spirit of evil which is ruin, and sickness, and disease, and death. Again, the honest life—the life which scorns unjust gain, which hates the false balance and the deceitful weight; the life of the tradesman or the professional man who will not make haste to be rich, who will suffer no shoddy, no cheating, no adulteration, no double prices—its gains are steady, perhaps, and slow, and moderate. But when a man sees his unscrupulous neighbour, apparently prospering by fraud, getting rich by rapid dishonesty, gaining by gambling speculations, is it not woe to him if the manna of honesty begins to pall, and to grow insipid to his taste; if he begin to sigh for the fleshpots of Egypt rather than the manna of God; for the dross and refuse of base earthly success, rather than the pure, wholesome righteousness of just and honourable toil? Once more—the law of duty; of simple allegiance to the law of God; of self-restraint for His sake; this is manna. But if the youth tire at this, suffer it to pall upon him, murmur at it; revert in memory to conquered temptations; how can the taste of the manna survive the reek of these Egyptian fulnesses? How can the violets of purity and humility bloom and shed their fragrance under the coarse, foul upas tree of sensual passions? And in all these cases God—God in His mercy—sends fiery serpents to avenge in His children His forgotten, His violated laws. Oh! let God's manna be dear to you; beware lest it pall upon you; beware how you grow weary of well-doing, and discontented with the gifts and ordinances of God. Oh, may God help us to cultivate all sweet and wholesome and spiritual tastes! If you do get to loathe the holy life—the manna of God—be sure that God has many a fiery serpent left in the wilderness for you; and oh! if you have already been bitten by that fiery serpent wherewith He punishes for sin, remember that "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so the Son of Man was lifted up, that whosoever believeth

in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (F. W. Farrar, D.D.)

The Lord sent fiery serpents.—*In the valley of Seir*:—I. SIN. Its first characteristic was complaining against God and God's guidance. 1. The hardships that lie in the path of obedience are the daily stumbling-rocks and rocks of offence. 2. The next element in their sin was that they despised the gifts God gave them. There are many joys within our reach, many sources of strength and peace and gladness, all innocent and God-given—faculties to develop, friendships to cultivate, treasures of wisdom and knowledge to ransack; yet how often are they stale and unprofitable to us—"miserable bread"! 3. Earthly and sensual desires. They ever carried Egypt with them. They rose to nothing noble or heroic. 4. And was not this sin of Israel just the sin of which they were always guilty? Their murmurings are always to the same tune, their rebellions on the same lines and from the same motives. Sin is persistent. It becomes habitual. Day by day our souls take on a bias either for good or evil. II. SUFFERING. 1. Sorrow ever trails in the wake of sin. 2. Sent by God. 3. For their good. III. SALVATION. (R. D. Shaw, B.D.)

Unreasonable complaint:—I. WHAT IT WAS THAT THEY DESPISED. Bread—(1) Given by God; (2) Miraculously. II. THE UNREASONABLENESS OF THE COMPLAINT. Had nothing else on which to depend during journey. III. THE CAUSES OF DISGUST. Forgetfulness, weariness, ingratitude. (Daniel Katterns.) *Complaining punished*:—To complain is to be atheistic, to murmur is to throw down the altar, to adopt a reproachful tone regarding the necessary education of life is to challenge Divine wisdom. The complaint was punished as complaining must always be. Fretfulness always brings its own biting serpent along with it. Charge what improbability you may upon the particular account of serpents in the text—get rid of them if you can from the historical record—there remains the fact, that the fretful spirit burns itself, the discontented soul creates its own agony, the mind wanting the sweet spirit of contentment stings itself night and day and writhes continually in great suffering. Discontent never brought joy, peevishness never tranquillised the home-life, fretfulness in the head of the house, or in any member of the house, creates a disagreeable feeling throughout the whole place. Complaint punishes itself. Every complaint has a corresponding serpent, and the serpent bites still. The people complained of the light food—then God sent them fiery serpents. There is always something worse than we have yet experienced. The children of Israel might have thought the bread was the worst fate that could befall them. To be without water, and to be continually living upon manna—surely there was nothing worse? We cannot exhaust the Divine resources of a penal kind. There is always some lower depth, always some keener bite, always some more painful sting, always some hotter hell. Take care how you treat life. Do not imagine that you can complain without being heard, and that you can be heard without punishment immediately following. This is the mystery of life; this is the fact of life. (J. Parker, D.D.)

We have sinned.—*The happiness of repentance*:—The proverb is old: "He runneth far that never returneth." Seven times a day falleth the just man, but he returneth; he riseth again and is sorry. When David had sinned so fearfully he looked back and repented. When another time he had caused the people to be numbered and so sinned, his heart smote him and he was sorry for it. A wild race did the prodigal son run, but he returned. Peter sinned most grievously, but he went out and wept bitterly. Happy were all these for their returning. And blessed be our good God for evermore that pardoneth upon repentance. Observe in their repentance their confession to God, because they had spoken against Him, and to Moses because they had also transgressed against him. "God knoweth all," saith Ambrose, "but yet He looketh for thy confession." God is never more ready to cover than when we lay open. The fox, say our books, taketh his prey by the throat so to stop all noise. And the devil, that fox, by all means hindereth holy confession, and bringeth men to deal with their souls as men used to deal with old rusty armour, either never, or once in a year or two, formally and superficially to scour it over. But as a thorn in your finger will grieve you still till it be had out, so will sin in your conscience still vex till it be acknowledged and confessed. If we have offended man, reconciliation to him is necessary. But "to thy God speak all," saith Chrysostom, "even whatsoever thou art ashamed to speak unto man, for He expecteth thy voice although He knew it before, and He will never upbraid thee as man will." Note, they trust in God's mercy that upon prayer He would pardon, and therefore they despair not. This ever must be joined to our repentance, or else it is a gulf that will swallow us up. What will tears and confession profit if there be no hope of pardon? "My sin is greater than can be

forgiven." "But thou liest, Cain," saith St. Augustine, "for the mercy of God is greater than all sinner's misery." (*Bp. Babington.*) **Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole.**—*The first setting up of the brazen serpent*:—I. DISCOURAGEMENT. "Because of the way." 1. Assuredly there are times when God's servants become discouraged. To our shame let us confess it. It is by faith that we live, but discouragement is generally the fruit of unbelief; and so by discouragement we cease to live a healthy and vigorous life, we begin to faint. The reason may be found in various things. (1) Occasionally it springs out of disappointment. How tantalising to see the land, as through a wall of crystal, and yet to be unable to put foot upon it! There may be like trials in store for us. Possibly some of my Master's servants have entertained the notion that they have made amazing progress in the Divine life, and just then an event has occurred which showed them their own weakness, and they have been forced to weep in secret places and upbraid themselves, saying, "After all this, am I no better than to be cast down about a trifle? Have I suffered so much, and yet is my progress so small?" (2) It was not, however, merely disappointment; it was much else. It was the unfriendliness of those who ought to have been most brotherly. Surely Edom ought to have granted his brother Israel the small privilege of passing through the country, seeing it was the near way to Canaan. I have known people of God much discouraged by the unfriendliness of those whom they thought to be their brethren and sisters in Christ. They went to them for sympathy, and they received rebuffs. Alas, that it should be often true that the souls of the people of God may be much discouraged because of the absence of Christian love! Resolve that it shall not be your fault. (3) Undoubtedly, however, the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the length of the way. The nation had been forty years on the march. To certain of God's people old age has brought much of heaviness by reason of its infirmities and afflictions. They often sigh, "Why are His chariots so long in coming?" They are willing in the spirit to abide the Master's will, but the flesh is weak, and they wonder whether the Lord has quite forgotten them. (4) Then there was the fatigue of the way, for journeying through that wilderness was by no means an easy business, especially along the shore of the gulf. Very rugged to this day is the pathway there. The road is full of hills and valleys, and rugged ravines and sharp stones, and weary sands. Travelling there is as bad as travelling well can be. To some of God's own children life is no parade upon a level lawn, but rough marching and deep wading. They have to take the bleak side of the hill; the wind blows upon them, and the sleet is driven in their eyes, and their home is but a cold harbour to them. 2. Now, you are discouraged, you say, because of the way; but whose way is it? Have you chosen your own way and wilfully run against your duty and against the providence of God? Well, then, I say nothing about the consequences of such conduct, for they must be terrible. But if you have endeavoured to follow the Lord fully, and if you have tried to keep the path of His statutes, then it must be well with you. Why are you discouraged? Judge not by the sight of the eyes, nor by the hearing of the ears: let faith sit on the judgment-seat, and I am sure she will give forth this verdict—"If the Lord wills it, it is well. If Jehovah leads the way the road must be right." Besides that, not only did God lead them but God carried them. He says Himself that He bare them on eagle's wings: for though the ways were often rough, yet it is wonderful to remember that their feet did not swell, neither did their garments wax old upon them all those forty years. How could they be better off than to have heaven for their granary, the rocks for their wine-cellar, and God Himself for their Provider.

II. COMPLAINT. "Spake against God and against Moses." Some of us have need to be cautioned against letting the spirit of discouragement hurry us on to quarrelling with God and questioning His love. It is ill for a saint to strive with his Saviour. When these people made their first complaint it was a singular one. It was a complaint about having been brought out of Egypt. "Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?" 1. Well, but first of all, they ought not to complain of being brought up out of Egypt, for that was a land of bondage where their male children had to perish in the river, and where they themselves longed to die, for life had become intolerable; and yet you see they are complaining that they were brought up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness as they said. Is it not possible that our rebellious hearts may even complain of God's mercy? For want of something to murmur at, discouraged ones will pick holes in the goodness of God. What a pity that it should be so! 2. Next, look at their complaint of having no food: "There is no bread, neither is there any water." It

was a great falsehood. There was bread, they had to admit that fact in the next breath: but then they did not call the manna "bread." They called it by an ugly name in the Hebrew. The water, too, was not muddy and thick like the water of the Nile; it was bright, clear, pure water from the rock; and therefore they would not call it water. They wanted water with substance in it which would leave grit between their teeth, and as the stream which leaped from the flinty rock was pure crystal they would not call it water. Have you not known people to whom God has given great mercy, and yet they have talked as if they were quite deserted? Unbelief is blind, just as surely as faith is far-seeing. Unbelief enjoys nothing, just as faith rejoices in everything.

III. PUNISHMENT. "Fiery serpents." 1. Some-
times they may be new trials. 2. In some Christians they may be the uprisings of their own corruptions. 3. Or, it may be, that God will let Satan loose upon us if we disbelieve. IV. REMEDY. 1. Confession. "We have sinned." 2. The second
help was that Moses prayed for the people. So our great cure against fiery serpents, horrible thoughts, and temptations, is intercession. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." If we have grown down-
hearted and discouraged, and have sinned by unbelieving utterances, let us go with our poor, little, trembling faith, and ask the Divine Interposer to stand before God on our behalf, and pray for us that our transgressions may be blotted out. 3. But
now comes the great remedy. After their confession and the prayer of their mediator, the Lord bade Moses make a brazen serpent and lift it up, that they might look upon it and live. When I first came to Christ as a poor sinner and
looked to Him, I thought Him the most precious object my eyes had ever lit upon; but this night I have been looking to Him while I have been preaching to you, in remembrance of my own discouragements, and my own complainings, and I find my Lord Jesus dearer than ever. I have been seriously ill, and sadly depressed, and I fear I have rebelled, and therefore I look anew to Him, and I tell you that He is fairer in my eyes to-night than He was at first. The brazen serpent healed me when first I saw the Lord; and the brazen serpent heals me to-night and shall do so till I die. "Look and live" is for saints as well as for sinners. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

Man's ruin and God's remedy:—I. MAN, THOU ART RUINED! The children of Israel in the wilderness were bitten with fiery serpents, whose venom soon tainted their blood, and after intolerable pain brought on death. Thou art much in the same condition. Oh, sinner, there are four things that stare thee in the face, and should alarm thee! 1. The first thing is thy sin. I hear thee say, "Yes, I know I am a sinner as well as the rest of mankind"; but I am not content with that confession, nor is God content with it either. Ah! ye are without Christ, remember, not only is the world lost, but you are lost; not only has sin defiled the race, but you yourself are stained by sin. Come, now, take the universal charge home to yourself. How many have your sins been? Count them, if you can. There is nothing to be gotten by hiding your sins. They'll spring up, if you dig deep as hell to hide them. Why not now be honest, and look at them to-day, for they'll look at you by and by, when Christ shall come in the clouds of judgment? 2. Sinner, thou hast not only thy sin to trouble thee, but there is the sentence of condemnation gone out against thee. Ye are condemned already. What though no officer has arrested you, though death has not laid his cold hand upon you, yet Scripture saith, "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he believeth not on the Son of God." I ask you this, whether you do not deserve it? If I never committed another sin, my past sins would fully justify the Lord in permitting me to go down alive into the pit. Now, these two things are enough to make any man tremble, if he did but feel them—his sin and his condemnation. But I have a third to mention. 3. Sinner, there is this to aggravate thy case and increase thine alarm—thy helplessness, thy utter inability to do anything to save thyself, even if God should offer thee the chance. Thou art dead in trespasses and sins. Talk of performing good works—thou canst not. But thou sayest, "I will repent." Repentance is not possible to thee as thou art, unless God gives it to thee. There is no door of mercy left for you by the law, and even by the gospel there is no door of mercy which you have power to enter, apart from the help which Christ affords you. If you think you can do anything, you have yet to unlearn that foolish conceit. Now have I not indeed described a horrible position for a sinner to be in—but there is something more remaining, a fourth thing. 4. Sinner, thou art not only guilty of past sin, and condemned for it, thou art not only unable, but if thou wert able, thou art so bad that thou wouldst never be willing to do anything that could save thyself. For this know—thy nature is totally depraved. Thou lovest that which

is evil, and not that which is good. II. Having thus set before you the hard part of the subject—THE SINNER'S RUIN—I now come to preach of HIS REMEDY. A certain school of physicians tells us that "like cures like." Whether it be true or not in medicine, I know it is true enough in theology. When the Israelites were bitten with the fiery serpents, it was a serpent that made them whole. And so you lost and ruined creatures are bidden now to look to Christ suffering and dying, and you will see in Him the counterpart of what you see in yourselves. 1. I charge you with sin. Now in Christ Jesus behold the sinner's substitute—the sin-offering. When I look at myself I think it would need much to redeem me, but when I see Christ dying I think He could redeem me if I were a million times as bad as I am. Now remember Christ not only paid barely enough for us, He paid more than enough. The Apostle Paul says, "His grace abounded"—"superabounded," says the Greek. Christ's redemption was so plenteous, that had God willed it, if all the stars of heaven had been peopled with sinners, Christ need not have suffered another pang to redeem them all—there was a boundless value in His precious blood. And, sinner, if there were so much as this, surely there is enough for thee. 2. And then again, if thou art not satisfied with Christ's sin-offering, just think a moment; God is satisfied, God the Father is content, and must not thou be? The Judge says, "I am satisfied; let the sinner go free, for I have punished the Surety in his stead"; and if the Judge is satisfied, surely the criminal may be. 3. In regard to the third particular. Our utter helplessness is such, that as I told you, we are unable to do anything. Yes, and I want you to look at Christ; was not He unable, too? You, in your father Adam, were once strong, but you lost your strength. Christ, too, was strong, but He laid aside all His omnipotence. See Him. The hand that poises the world hangs on a nail. See Him. The shoulders that supported the skies are drooping over the Cross. Look at Him. The eyes whose glances light up the sun are sealed in darkness. Look away from your own weakness to His weakness, and remember that in His weakness He is strong, and in His weakness you are strong too. Go see His hands; they are weak, but in their weakness they are stretched out to save you. Look at His eyes; they are closing in death, but from them comes the ray of light that shall kindle your dark spirit. Unable though thou art, go to Him who Himself was crucified through weakness, and remember that now "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." I told you you could not repent, but if you go to Christ He can melt your heart into contrition, though it be as hard as iron. I said you could not believe; but if you sit down and look at Christ, a sight of Christ will make you believe, for He is exalted on high to give repentance and remission of sins. 4. And then the fourth thing. "Oh," cries one, "you said we were too estranged to be even willing to come to Christ." I know you were; and therefore it is He came down to you. You would not come to Him, but He comes to you, and though you are very evil, He comes with sacred magic in His arm, to change your heart. (*Ibid.*)

The brazen serpent; an emblem of heaven's antidote in the gospel of Christ:—

I. THE ANTIDOTE PROVIDED IN THE GOSPEL IS FOR A MOST LAMENTABLE EVIL. 1. The affliction under which the Jews were now suffering, resembles sin in that it was—(1) Imparted; (2) Painful; (3) Mortal. 2. Dissimilar, in that (1) One was material, the other is spiritual. (2) One was a calamity, the other is a crime. (3) The one would necessarily end in death, the other might continue for ever. II. THE ANTIDOTE PROVIDED IN THE GOSPEL ORIGINATED IN THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD. Points of difference between the remedies. 1. One was apparently arbitrary, the other is manifestly adapted. 2. The one was insensible to the sufferer, the other is filled with sympathy. 3. The one was local in its aspect, the other is worldwide in its bearing. 4. The one was temporary in its efficacy, the other is perpetual. III. THE ANTIDOTE PROVIDED IN THE GOSPEL REQUIRES THE PERSONAL APPLICATION OF THE SUFFERERS. 1. The personal application is most simple. (1) As looking is the easiest act of the body, so faith is the easiest act of the mind. (2) Man has a propensity for believing; he is a credulous animal; his ruin is, that he believes too much. 2. The personal application is most unmeritorious. 3. The personal application is most indispensable. 4. The personal application is ever efficacious. (*Homilist.*)

*The brazen serpent:—*I. THE CAUSE WHICH PRODUCED IT. 1. On man's side it was sin. In vers. 4, 5, what ingratitude and rebellion. The people were safe, and enjoying manna, yet discontented. Can you wonder at judgment? (ver. 6). Was it not so in Eden? First parents were safe, happy; manna of Paradise, yet discontented. Can you wonder that they fell under the curse? The serpent had bitten them. 2. On God's side it was grace.

In ver. 7, you see terror; yet what plea? Only pity! Nevertheless vouchsafed (ver. 8). Precisely so with our deliverance. When God beheld a race defiled and poisoned with the fiery serpent bite of sin, why did He interfere? (Job xxxiii. 24). It was all of grace (John iii. 16). II. THE CHARACTER WHICH MARKED IT. Somewhat singular that the Lord should have chosen to heal His people by bidding them look at a brazen serpent. He might have healed by a word; yet He chose the most hideous object. Why? for several reasons. 1. It was an appointment without any natural attraction. A piece of brass. The image of a serpent. Cold reason cried out, "Of what use is that? It is repulsive, not attractive. We will not believe. Let us reject it." Was it not so with the Cross? (Isa. liii. 2, 3; 1 Cor. i. 23). 2. It was an emblem of the curse, without its hatefulness. Notice, it was a serpent, yet not taken from the wilderness. It was like the fiery serpents, but without their poison. So with the Lord Jesus. A Man in the "likeness of sinful flesh," but not from the sons of Adam. Without sin. Hence the curse was represented, but not embodied. Enough to give validity to atonement, but not enough to invalidate atonement. 3. It was an object of faith, without limit to its efficacy. Elevated on high for all, even for most distant spectators. So with the Cross of Christ elevated for all (John xii. 32). What limit? Age? (Young Timothy and St. Paul the aged.) Class? (Rich Joseph and wretched Lazarus.) Guilt? (Mary Magdalene and dying thief.) Listen, then, ye who say, "Gospel not for me." True, you can do nothing; but you can look (Isa. xlv. 22). III. THE CONSEQUENCES WHICH RESULT FROM IT. With Israelites the poison was extracted, pain abated, health restored. It is so still. Come by faith to Jesus. Sin pardoned, conscience pacified, soul renewed. In one word, salvation. See this a little more fully. 1. Perfect salvation. We read of no return of the serpents. The people healed were relieved from the curse altogether. No half-salvation. It is so with all believers. If you have found Christ, you are fully pardoned. No reservations (1 John i. 7). 2. Instant salvation. When life was fainting, as the sufferers looked, their strength returned in a moment. Just as one penitent look to the crucified Christ brings a present salvation. Not a thing put off. "He that believeth hath everlasting life." 3. Free salvation. These Israelites had not to walk to the pole, had not to use their own remedies. Only to look in their misery, and to live. Why should it be otherwise now? Perhaps some of you feel the bites of conscience; yet you have no peace. It may be that you rest too much on your own remedies. You do not see that all has been done, and that now the gift is free. In conclusion, let me speak to you who have looked, and who live. Do not think yourselves beyond danger. Like Israel, you may murmur or backslide. If so—(1) Expect chastening. (2) Come again and again to the Cross. Never beyond the need of that till death. (J. H. Titcomb, M.A.) *The brazen serpent*.—I. THE DANGER OF GIVING WAY TO DESPONDENCY. Immoderate grief over bereavement, undue depression over temporal misfortunes, extreme sensitiveness to the assaults which men may make upon us while we are seeking to follow Christ, morbid regret at the disappointment of our hopes of serving God in some peculiar way on which our hearts are set, and exaggerated ideas of the evil which will ensue from the refusal of some Edomite to do that which would have been of great benefit to us, that which would have cost him nothing, and which we had courteously requested at his hands—all these are at the next station on the line toward rebellion against God, and ought to be checked at once, before they lead to more serious consequences. A friend of mine, some years ago, received a letter from a missionary on the West Coast of Africa, in which, as a curiosity, some serpent eggs were contained. He laid them carefully aside, thinking to preserve them as they were; but one day, when he went to show them to a visitor, he discovered, to his dismay, that the heat of the drawer had hatched them into serpents, and there was a heap of crawling things before his eyes. So despondency is a serpent's egg, which, if we are not careful, will hatch in our hearts into a serpent itself, and poison us with its venomous bite. It has the germ of serious and aggravated sin within it, and we must seek very speedily to overmaster it; nor need we have much difficulty in rising above it, for we have only to remember and believe that God is on our side, and all discouragement will disappear. II. THE TYPICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE METHOD which, in obedience to God's command, Moses adopted for the healing of the people. Here was, first of all, a disease. Alike in its origin and nature, the malady of sin is well illustrated by a serpent's bite. Unless a cure be effected, the death of the soul must result. If we were but as sensible of our malady as these Israelites were of the disease that was burning up their bodies, we would cry out in an agony of earnestness for deliverance. But let

us not forget to look at the cure which was here effected. "The brazen serpent," says Alford, "made in the likeness of the serpents which had bitten them, represented to them the poison which had gone through their frames; and it was hung up there on the banner-staff as a trophy, to show that for the poison there was healing, that the plague had been overcome. In it there was no poison—only the likeness of it. Now, was not our Lord Jesus made in the likeness of sinful flesh?" The bitten Israelites were healed by looking to the serpent of brass; so the sinner is saved by believing in Jesus (Isa. xlv. 22; Psa. xxxiv. 5). Two things are specially taught us by this emblem of faith. The first is, that the object of faith is not anything in ourselves. So long as we look in, we can see nothing to give us hope or happiness; but when we look to Jesus, we behold in Him a deliverer, and see in His righteousness a foundation on which we may securely rest. The eye is that which "takes in" the realities of the external world, and faith is that which "takes in" the truth about Christ. It is the receptive faculty of the soul; and when by it we receive and rest upon Christ for our salvation, our act corresponds in spirit to the look of the outward eye turned by the suffering Israelite on the uplifted serpent. Observe, I said, when we receive and rest on Christ; and this resting is the sacred thing taught us by this emblem of faith. "I will look to you, then, to arrange all that," said one friend to another, at the close of a business conference; and that trustfulness which he expressed in the honour of his friend is of the same kind as the restful confidence which the believer has in his Lord. III. BUT WHO MAY LOOK? "Every one that is bitten." There you might see the man all but dead, raising himself upon his arm, and straining his glazed eyes if haply he might behold the glittering symbol; yonder another, wiping away his tears of anguish to look upon the glorious object; and yonder still, a mother with her child, eagerly pointing to the flagstaff, if perchance she may fix her loved one's gaze upon the mystic healer. But no one would be tempted to ask, will it heal me? for he would reason thus: it will cure any bitten one that looks, and therefore me. So "there is life for a look at the crucified One," for "whosoever believeth." (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *Lifting up the brazen serpent*.—I. THE PERSON IN MORTAL PERIL for whom the brazen serpent was made and lifted up. Our text saith, "It came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." 1. The fiery serpents first of all came among the people because they had despised God's way and God's bread. "The soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way." As an old divine says, "It was lonesome and longsome," but still it was God's way, and therefore it ought not to have been loathsome: His pillar of fire and cloud went before them, and His servants Moses and Aaron led them like a flock, and they ought to have followed cheerfully. This is one of the great standing follies of men; they cannot be content to wait on the Lord and keep His way, but they prefer a will and way of their own. 2. The people, also, quarrelled with God's food. He gave them the best of the best, for "men did eat angels' food"; but they called the manna by an opprobrious title, as if they thought it unsubstantial, and only fitted to puff them out, because it was easy of digestion, and did not breed in them that heat of blood and tendency to disease which a heavier diet would have brought with it. Being discontented with their God they quarrelled with the bread which He set upon their table, though it surpassed any that mortal man has ever eaten before or since. This is another of man's follies; his heart refuses to feed upon God's Word or believe God's truth. He craves for the flesh-meat of carnal reason, the leeks and the garlic of superstitious tradition, and the cucumbers of speculation; he cannot bring his mind down to believe the Word of God, or to accept truth so simple, so fitted to the capacity of a child. 3. Observe concerning those persons for whom the brazen serpent was specially lifted up that they had been actually bitten by the serpents. The Lord sent fiery serpents among them, but it was not the serpents being among them that involved the lifting up of a brazen serpent, it was the serpents having actually poisoned them which led to the provision of a remedy. "It shall come to pass that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live." God's medicine is for the sick, and His healing is for the diseased. The grace of God through the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ is for men who are actually and really guilty. What an awful thing it is to be bitten by a serpent! I dare say some of you recollect the case of Gurling, one of the keepers of the reptiles in the Zoological Gardens. It happened in October, 1852. This unhappy man was about to part with a friend who was going to Australia, and according to the wont of many he must needs drink with him. He drank considerable quantities of gin, and though he would probably have been in a great passion

if any one had called him drunk, yet reason and common-sense had evidently become overpowered. He went back to his post at the gardens in an excited state. He had some months before seen an exhibition of snake-charming, and this was on his poor muddled brain. He must emulate the Egyptians, and play with serpents. First he took out of its cage a Morocco venom-snake, put it round his neck, twisted it about, and whirled it round about him. Happily for him it did not arouse itself so as to bite. The assistant-keeper cried out, "For God's sake put back the snake!" but the foolish man replied, "I am inspired." Putting back the venom-snake, he exclaimed, "Now for the cobra." This deadly serpent was somewhat torpid with the cold of the previous night, and therefore the rash man placed it in his bosom till it revived, and glided downward till its head appeared below the back of his waistcoat. He took it by the body, about a foot from the head, and then seized it lower down by the other hand, intending to hold it by the tail and swing it round his head. He held it for an instant opposite to his face, and like a flash of lightning the serpent struck him between the eyes. The blood streamed down his face, and he called for help, but his companion fled in horror; and, as he told the jury, he did not know how long he was gone, for he was "in a maze." When assistance arrived Gurling was sitting on a chair, having restored the cobra to its place. He said, "I am a dead man." They put him in a cab, and took him to the hospital. First his speech went, he could only point to his poor throat and moan: then his vision failed him, and lastly his hearing. His pulse gradually sank, and in one hour from the time at which he had been struck he was a corpse. There was only a little mark upon the bridge of his nose, but the poison spread over the body, and he was a dead man. I tell you that story that you may use it as a parable and learn never to play with sin, and also in order to bring vividly before you what it is to be bitten by a serpent. Suppose that Gurling could have been cured by looking at a piece of brass, would it not have been good news for him? There was no remedy for that poor infatuated creature, but there is a remedy for you. For men who have been bitten by the fiery serpents of sin Jesus Christ is lifted up: not for you only who are as yet playing with the serpent, not for you only who have warned it in your bosom, and felt it creeping over your flesh, but for you who are actually bitten, and are mortally wounded. 4. The bite of the serpent was painful. We are told in the text that these serpents were "fiery" serpents, which may perhaps refer to their colour, but more probably has reference to the burning effects of their venom. It inflamed the blood so that every vein became a boiling river, swollen with anguish. In some men that poison of asps which we call sin has inflamed their minds. They are restless, discontented, and full of fear and anguish. Jesus died for such as are at their wits' end: for such as cannot think straight, for those who are tumbled up and down in their minds, for those who are condemned already. What a comfortable thing that we are able to tell you this! 5. The bite of these serpents was, as I have told you, mortal. The Israelites could have no question about that, because in their own presence "much people of Israel died." Now, we know that many have perished as the result of sin. We are not in doubt as to what sin will do, for we are told by the infallible Word, that "the wages of sin is death," and, yet again, "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." We know, also, that this death is endless misery, "where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched." We believe in what the Lord has said in all its solemnity of dread, and, knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men to escape therefrom. 6. There is no limit set to the stage of poisoning: however far gone, the remedy still had power. II. THE REMEDY PROVIDED FOR HIM. This was as singular as it was effectual. 1. It was purely of Divine origin, and it is clear that the invention of it, and the putting of power into it, was entirely of God. Shall the bite of a serpent be cured by looking at a serpent? Shall that which brings death also bring life? But herein lay the excellency of the remedy, that it was of Divine origin; for when God ordains a cure He is by that very fact bound to put potency into it. He will not devise a failure, nor prescribe a mockery. 2. This particular remedy of a serpent lifted on a pole was exceedingly instructive, though I do not suppose that Israel understood it. We have been taught by our Lord and know the meaning. It was a serpent impaled upon a pole. Wonder of wonders that our Lord Jesus should condescend to be symbolised by a dead serpent. The brazen serpent had no venom of itself, but it took the form of a fiery serpent. Christ is no sinner, and in Him is no sin. But the brazen serpent was in the form of a serpent; and so was Jesus sent forth by God "in the likeness of sinful flesh." He came under the law, and sin was imputed to Him, and therefore He came under the wrath and curse of God for our sakes. 3. Please to recollect

that in all the camp of Israel there was but one remedy for serpent-bite, and that was the brazen serpent; and there was but one brazen serpent, not two. Israel might not make another. If they had made a second, it would have had no effect. There is one Saviour, and only one. There is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved. Oh, sinner, look to Jesus on the Cross, for He is the one remedy for all forms of sin's poisoned wounds. 4. There was but one healing serpent, and that one was bright and lustrous. It was a serpent of brass, and brass is a shining metal. This was newly-made brass, and therefore not dimmed, and whenever the sun shone, there flashed forth a brightness from this brazen serpent. It might have been a serpent of wood or of any other metal if God had so ordained; but He commanded that it must be of brass, that it might have a brightness about it. What a brightness there is about our Lord Jesus Christ! If we do but exhibit Him in His own true metal He is lustrous in the eyes of men. 5. Once more, this remedy was an enduring one. It was a serpent of brass, and I suppose it remained in the midst of the camp from that day forward. Had it been made of other materials it might have been broken, or have decayed, but a serpent of brass would last as long as fiery serpents pestered the desert camp. As long as there was a man bitten there was the serpent of brass to heal him. What a comfort is this, that Jesus is still able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them! III. THE APPLICATION OF THE REMEDY, or the link between the serpent-bitten man and the brass serpent which was to heal him. What was the link? 1. It was of the most simple kind imaginable. The brazen serpent might have been, if God had so ordered it, carried into the house where the sick man was, but it was not so. It might have been applied to him by rubbing; he might have been expected to repeat a certain form of prayer, or to have a priest present to perform a ceremony, but there was nothing of the kind; he had only to look. It was well that the cure was so simple, for the danger was so frequent. There is life in a look at Jesus; is not this simple enough? 2. But please to notice how very personal it was. A man could not be cured by anything anybody else could do for him. If he had been bitten by the serpent and had refused to look to the serpent of brass, and had gone to his bed, no physician could help him. A pious mother might kneel down and pray for him, but it would be of no use. Sisters might come in and plead, ministers might be called in to pray that the man might live; but he must die despite their prayers if he did not look. It is just so with you. Some of you have written to me begging me to pray for you: so I have, but it avails nothing unless you yourselves believe in Jesus Christ. There is nothing in His death to save you, there is nothing in His life to save you, unless you will trust Him. It has come to this, you must look, and look for yourself. 3. And then, again, it is very instructive. This looking, what did it mean? It meant this—self-help must be abandoned, and God must be trusted. IV. THE CURE EFFECTED. "When he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." 1. He was healed at once. He had not to wait five minutes, nor five seconds. It is done like a flash of lightning; pardon is not a work of time. Sanctification needs a lifetime, but justification needs no more than a moment. Thou believest, thou livest. 2. This remedy healed again and again. Very possibly after a man had been healed he might go back to his work, and be attacked by a second serpent, for there were broods of them about. What had he to do? Why, to look again, and if he was wounded a thousand times he must look a thousand times. If you have sin on your conscience, look to Jesus. The healthiest way of living where serpents swarm is never to take your eye off the brazen serpent at all. 3. This cure was of universal efficacy to all who used it. V. A LESSON FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THEIR LORD. What ought we to do? We should imitate Moses, whose business it was to set the brazen serpent upon a pole. It is your business and mine to lift up the gospel of Christ Jesus, so that all may see it. Publish Christ and His salvation. He was never meant to be treated as a curiosity in a museum; He is intended to be exhibited in the highways, that those who are sin-bitten may look at Him. "But I have no proper pole," says one. The best sort of pole to exhibit Christ upon is a high one, so that He may be seen the further. Exalt Jesus. Speak well of His name. I do not know any other virtue that there can be in the pole but its height. The more you can speak in your Lord's praise, the higher you can lift Him up, the better; but for all other styles of speech there is nothing to be said. Do lift Christ up. "Oh," says one, "but I have not a long standard." Then lift Him up on such as you have, for there are short people about who will be able to see by your means. I think I told you once of a picture which I saw of the brazen serpent. I want the

Sunday-school teachers to listen to this. The artist represented all sorts of people clustering round the pole, and as they looked the horrible snakes dropped off their arms, and they lived. There was such a crowd around the pole that a mother could not get near it. She carried a little babe, which a serpent had bitten. You could see the blue marks of the venom. As she could get no nearer, the mother held her child aloft, and turned its little head that it might gaze with its infant eye upon the brazen serpent and live. Do this with your little children, you Sunday-school teachers. Even while they are yet little, pray that they may look to Jesus Christ and live; for there is no bound set to their age. Old men snake-bitten came hobbling on their crutches. "Eighty years old am I," saith one, "but I have looked to the brazen serpent, and I am healed." Little boys were brought out by their mothers, though as yet they could hardly speak plainly, and they cried in child language, "I look at the great snake and it bless me." All ranks, and sexes, and characters, and dispositions looked and lived. Who will look to Jesus at this good hour? (C. H. Spurgeon.)

The cure for the malady of sin:—Observe analogy between cure for serpent's bite narrated here, and cure for malady of sin. I. OCCASION FOR CURE. Bitten. Sinned. II. ORIGIN OF REMEDY. God's grace. III. APPLICATION OF REMEDY. Serpent lifted up. Christ. (W. Ormiston, D.D.)

The brazen serpent;—1. As it seemed to human wisdom a most foolish thing to be healed by the bare and only sight of a brazen serpent, so to all natural wise men of the world it seemeth as unlikely and unreasonable that any should be saved by faith in Christ crucified. 2. Seeing the serpent was a sign of Christ, we learn that Christ was preached and published in the time of the law, albeit darkly and obscurely. For as there is but one salvation, so there is but one way to attain unto it; to wit, faith in Christ. 3. In this type we see the nature of the sacraments. The brazen serpent in itself had no operation to work anything; it had no virtue to cure or recover any man of any disease. The sacraments of themselves cannot confer grace, only they are instruments of God's mercies, which He useth of His goodness toward us to convey to us good things. 4. This present type teacheth us that we are justified by faith alone, without the works of the law. For as the Israelites stung of these serpents were cured, so are we saved; as health was offered by the serpent, so is salvation by Christ. But the Israelites did nothing at all, but only look up to the brazen serpent; they were not called to make satisfaction for their rebellion, or to go on pilgrimage, nor so much as to dress and bind up their wounds, but only to behold the serpent set upon the pole. There is required nothing of us touching our justification and salvation but to fix the eyes of our faith upon Christ. True it is, many other virtues and graces are required to make up the full perfection of a Christian man, that he may be complete, wanting nothing; yet he is justified, and doth stand as righteous in the sight of God by faith only. 5. Great consolation ariseth from this similitude to all such as are weak in faith and feel the corruptions of their hearts pressing them, and the temptations of Satan often overcoming them. For we have great comfort given us to fight the enemies of our souls by consideration of these fierce and fiery serpents. True it is they did continually bite and sting the children of Israel; yet they could not destroy them, for they had a remedy at hand to help themselves. So hath God restrained the rage of all the enemies of our peace and salvation. For howsoever the devil and his angels are always tempting, their strength is diminished, their will to hurt is greater than their power of hurting, so that they cannot execute the cruelty they desire. 6. Again, note that God requireth not of the Israelites stung in the wilderness the use of both eyes, nor exacteth a perfect sight to behold the serpent. Such as looked upon it with a weak and dim sight, even with half an eye only, there being among them young and old, strong and weak, sharp-sighted and blear-eyed; yet all that saw the serpent set up were cured, not for the goodness of their sight, but for the promise and ordinance of God. So such as have a true faith, though it be as a grain of mustard-seed, which is the least of all seeds, can lay hold on Christ and apply Him to themselves. A small drop of water is as well and truly water as the whole ocean sea; a little spark is true fire as well as a mighty flame; a little quantity of earth is as truly earth as the whole globe thereof. So a small measure of faith is as well true faith as a full persuasion and assurance, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against it. 7. Lastly, this teacheth us what is the nature and property of a true justifying faith, and wherein it consisteth, namely, in a special and particular application of Christ's righteousness to our own selves. It was not enough for these Israelites which were stung that others should look upon the serpent set up, but it was required of every

one (to work the cure) to behold it himself. So must we have a particular faith in Christ, apprehending His merits. (*W. Attersoll.*)

Vers. 16-20. *Spring up, O well.—A song of the pilgrimage*.—I. THE NEEDS OF HUMAN PILGRIMAGE. 1. How indispensable are the things which we need. 2. How many are the things which we need. 3. How constant are our needs. We may change our place and our circumstances, but we never change our dependent condition. II. THE DIVINE PROVISION FOR THE NEEDS OF HUMAN PILGRIMAGE. 1. Promised by God. 2. Bestowed in connection with human effort. 3. Enkindled human joy, which was expressed in this song. 4. Suitably commemorated. Let us be eager to perpetuate the memory of our mercies. III. THE CONTINUOUSNESS OF HUMAN PILGRIMAGE. The well was not the goal: a place to halt, but not to settle. (*W. Jones.*) *A song at the well-head*.—I. These people required water as we greatly need grace, and there was a PROMISE GIVEN CONCERNING THE SUPPLY. "The Lord spake unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water." Beloved, we have a promise. A promise? nay, a thousand promises! God's people were never in any plight whatever but what there was a promise to meet that condition. 1. The supply promised here was a Divine supply: "I will give them water." Who else could satisfy those flocks and herds? By what mechanism or by what human toil could all those multitudes of people have received enough to drink? God can do it, and He will. The supply of grace that you are to receive in your time of need is a Divine supply. You are not to look to man for grace. 2. As it was a Divine supply, so also it was a suitable one. The people were thirsty, and the promise was, "I will give them water." What dost thou want? Go and lay open thy needs before the Lord. Tell Him what it is thou requirest, if thou knowest, and then add to thy prayer, "And what I know not that I need, yet give me, for Thou art able to do exceeding abundantly above all that I can ask or even think: not according to my apprehension of my necessities, but according to Thy perception of my needs, deal with Thy servant, O Lord, and grant me that which is most suitable to my case." "Gather the people together, and I will give them water." 3. Observe, too, that the supply promised was an abundant supply. No child of God shall be left to perish for want of the necessary supplies. "I will give them water." 4. As it was a Divine supply, a suitable supply, and an abundant supply, so also it was a sure supply. "I will give them water." It is not, "I may, perhaps, do it; possibly there shall be refreshment for them"; but, "I will give them water." "Oh! the splendour of the Lord's "shalls" and "wills"! They never fail. II. Observe THE SONG. These people had not been singing for years; ever since the day when they had sung at the Red Sea, "Sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously," the minstrelsy of Israel had been hushed, except when they danced before the calf of gold; but for their God they had had little or no music. But now they come together to the digging of the well, and the children of Israel sing this song, "Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it." 1. This song may be looked upon as the voice of cheerfulness. There was no water, but they were still in good spirits. Supplies were short, but their courage was still great. Cheerfulness in want, cheerfulness upon the bed of pain, cheerfulness under slander, singing, like the nightingale, in the night, praising God when the thorn is at the breast, this is a high Christian attainment, which we should seek after, and not be content without. 2. I like, too, the look of these children of Israel, singing to the Lord before the water came, praising Him while they were yet thirsty, living for a little while upon the recollections of the past, believing that He who smote the rock, and the waters gushed out, and who gave them bread from heaven, would surely supply their needs. Let us pitch a tune and join with them, however low our estate may be. 3. Note, again, that this song was the voice not so much of natural cheerfulness as of cheerfulness sustained by faith. They believed the promise, "Gather the people together, and I will give them water." They sang the song of expectation. I think this is one of the peculiar enjoyments of faith, to be the substance of things hoped for. The joy of hope, who shall measure it? 4. This song, also, was no doubt greatly increased in its volume, and more elevated in its tone, when the water did begin to spring. After the elders of the people had digged for awhile, the flowing crystal began to leap into the air; they saw it run over the margin of the well, the multitude pressed around to quench their thirst, and then they sang, "Spring up, O well! Flow on, flow on, perennial fount! Flow on, thou wondrous stream Divinely given! Flow on, and let the praises of those who drink, flow also! Sing ye unto it, and ye that drink lift up your songs, and ye that mark your

neighbours as their eyes flash with delight as they receive the needed refreshment, let your song increase as you see the joy of others." All ye who have received anything of Divine grace, sing ye unto it! Bless God by singing and praising His name while you are receiving His favours. III. The song was a PRAYER. "Spring up, O well," was virtually a prayer to God that He would make the well spring up, only it was faith's way of singing her prayer. 1. We would remark of this prayer, that it went at once to the work, and sought for that which was required. What was needed? Not a well, but water; not mere digging in the sand, but the obtaining and the drinking of the water. Let me remind you that it is very easy for us to forget what it is that we want, and to be satisfied with something short of it. Now, what we need is not the means of grace, but the grace of the means. Strive after vital godliness, real soul-work, the life-giving operation of the Spirit of God in your hearts, or else you may have the well, but you will not have any springings therefrom. Remember, then, it went direct to the point. 2. Notice, also, that this prayer was the prayer of faith, like the song. Now, "without faith it is impossible to please God": this is emphatically true with regard to prayer. He who pleads with God in unbelief really insults Him, and will get no blessing. 3. Notice, further, that it was united prayer. All the people prayed, "Spring up, O well!" I daresay that was a prayer-meeting at which everybody prayed, for they were all thirsty, and therefore they all said, "Spring up, O well!" What blessed meetings those are when the souls of all present are in it! IV. They began with a promise; they turned the promise into a song and into a prayer, and they did not stop there, but THEN THEY WENT TO WORK. "God helps them that help themselves," is an old proverb, and it is true with God's people as well as true of Providence. If we want to have God's blessing, we must not expect to receive it by lying passive. 1. When God intends to bless a people, effort is always esteemed to be honourable. "The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it." They were not ashamed of the work. And when God shall bless a Church and people, they must all feel that it is a very great honour to do anything in the service of God. 2. But it was also effort which was accomplished by very feeble means. They digged the well, and they digged it with their staves—not very first-class tools. Would not the mattock and the spade have been better? Ay, but they did as they were told. They digged with their staves. These, I suppose, were simply their rods, which, like the sheiks in the East, they carried in their hands as an emblem of government, somewhat similar to the crook of the shepherd. These they used, according as they were commanded. Well, we must dig with our staves. We must dig as we can. We must use what abilities we have. 3. It was effort in God's order. They digged the well "by the direction of the lawgiver." We must not serve God according to our fancies. Let us keep close to the good old paths which are laid down in Holy Writ, and, digging the well, we shall get the water. 4. It was effort made in faith. They digged the well, but as they digged it they felt so certain that the water would come that they sang at the work, "Spring up, O well!" This is the true way to work if we would get a blessing. We must preach in faith, believing that the Word cannot return unto our Master void. We must teach in the Sabbath-school in faith, believing that the children will be led to seek Christ early, and to find Him. We must distribute the tract in faith, believing that if we cast our bread upon the waters, we shall find it after many days. You must take care that you have this faith. (C. H. Spurgeon.) *The song at the well*.—I. The well of salvation CHOKED up with rubbish of superstition and ignorance, technical theologies, dry dissertations, doctrinal controversies, &c. II. The well of salvation CLEARED out. A princely and noble work. III. THE WORK OF OPENING UP THE WELL OF SALVATION TO MEN SHOULD BE DONE WITH JOYFULNESS. (Hom. Monthly.) *The song of the well*.—What is celebrated with such sparkling joy in this little burst of melody is the happy union among all ranks, and the spirit of universal goodwill and co-operation in the work—giving cheerful augury for the future of the tribes in entering on the promised land, and a lively demonstration of popular confidence in their leaders. 1. There is a personal lesson respecting the spirit in which we ought to do our work. When the people were called to bore for water in a novel fashion, how inspiring it is to read, "Then Israel sang this song!" This lightened their toil, and helped to prosper the issue. Thank God, "He gives us songs in the very night." Let us remember how our Lord Himself, on the eve of His betrayal, and in full view of the bitter Cross, alleviated His sorrows and braced His spirit for the task—"He sang a hymn." What a lesson for this work-a-day world, when nothing

worth doing can be undertaken without something being endured! But "a cheerful heart doeth good like a medicine." And singing is infectious. They sang the song, and they digged the well. So work, and so sing. 2. A social lesson—the blessings of united effort. We are to mark how zealously all ranks joined in the work, and how "the leaders led in Israel." When Israel thus laboured, we hear of no disorder. Murmurings were stilled. High and low were full of heart and full of hope, because full of love. 3. A philanthropic lesson—dig a well. This well became a lasting blessing, celebrated in immortal song. A disciple of Mohammed, it is said, came to the prophet one day and asked, "What shall I best do as a memorial to my mother who is dead?" to which he replied, "Dig a well, and call it by her name, and put upon it, 'This well is for my mother.'" Beautiful idea! a monument truly serviceable, and therefore sure to last. Some memories are "writ in water," but here a mother's name is blissfully perpetuated in supplying the pure refreshing draught to weary wayfarers. This form of good endures like "a joy for ever," trickling down from age to age. "Dig a well." Whoso giveth a cup of cold water shall in no wise lose his reward. 4. A spiritual lesson. "Gather the people to Me; I will give them water." The point here emphasised is the connection between promise, preparation, and prayer, if we would win the privilege of drawing water with joy from the wells of salvation. (*A. H. Drysdale, M.A.*) *The springing well*:—This rising fountain may be viewed as a beautiful emblem of the springing up of grace in the heart, when it becomes the subject of the life-giving influences of the Holy Spirit, and which Christ Himself takes occasion to illustrate by the same kind of allusion, when conversing with the Samaritan woman. The water that He will give to them that ask Him is admirably descriptive of the vitality, purity, and perpetuity of grace. The ministers of Christ, as these princes of the people, at the command of God, and under the superintendence of His providence, move the ground, where the water of life springs up and yields the purest satisfaction, and the heart becomes as if itself an inward source of good. How many hearts, through the gift of Christ, have become as wells of living water, rising fountains of spiritual thoughts, and of heavenly affections, sweet and refreshing! It was under the direction of His providence, and the influences of His Spirit, that they have become so. And now, it is only for time to bring forth His eternal purposes, and at the word of His grace the result will be, where least looked for or thought of, as when the fountain of Beer, not before known of, rose at the command, "Spring up, O well!" This it is that, seen amidst the barren wastes of nature, delights the eye and cheers the heart of every Christian, who not less longs and prays for the life of souls, and the communications of living streams from Christ, than those at this station longed for the cooling spring. (*W. Seaton.*)

Vers. 21–35. **Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass.**—*The wicked hate and persecute the godly without any just cause*:—This is the practice of wicked men to pursue the children of God with all spiteful dealing, albeit they offer no occasion of hurt unto them. Cain; Joseph's brethren, &c. The reasons are very plain. 1. For it seemeth unto them more than strange that the faithful are not brethren with them in evil, but separate themselves from them, and will touch no unclean thing. This is that which the Apostle Peter witnesseth (1 Pet. iv. 4, 5). But it is better for us to have the hatred of men than fail in any part of our duty unto God. 2. No marvel if the wicked hate the godly, for the world hateth Christ. Uses: 1. We may assure ourselves that it is a lamentable condition to dwell among such malicious and mischievous enemies. 2. Seeing this is the entertainment that we must look for in the world, it behoves us to live in unity and to love one another as the children of the Father and the disciples of Christ. 3. Seeing hatred lodgeth in the heart of a wicked man toward the faithful, it is our duty to pray to God to be delivered from unreasonable and evil men (2 Thess. iii. 2, 3). This David declareth (Psa. xxxv. 12, 13, 15, 16, 17). Thus doth God wean us from the love of this world, that we should long after His kingdom, where is fulness of joy for evermore. (*W. Attersoll.*) *The king's highway*:—I. THE KING'S HIGHWAY SHOULD BE A PUBLIC ROAD. Royalty ought to be democracy personified. What the king holds is for the people's use; what he does, for their good. II. THE KING'S HIGHWAY SHOULD, THEREFORE, BE FREE. But, alas! what king's highway is free? There are taxes and hindrances, and some are not allowed to pass it at all. National jealousies and pride bar the national highway. III. THE KING'S HIGHWAY BEING CLOSED, INJURES THOSE WHO CLOSE IT. 1. It makes enemies. Those who demand access are sore at the refusal. 2. It does not accomplish the object in view.

Those who wish to get through, find other ways round. 3. It causes loss. The Israelites would have paid for all they required, and so have benefited the Edumites. IV. THERE IS ONE KING'S HIGHWAY WHICH IS FREE TO ALL, from which none are turned back, which is free from toll and safe from foes. This is that which Christ has opened, and which leads straight to the throne of God. (*Homilist.*)

Vers. 32-35. *Og the king of Bashan went out against them.*—*War with the king of Bashan*:—When God had removed one great rub out of Israel's way to Canaan, namely, Sihon, king of Heshbon, now starts up another *remora*, greater (at least in person) than the former, namely, Og king of Bashan, who came forth to war against them (chap. xxi. 33-35), but more largely described (Deut. iii. 1-22), wherein God's kindness to Israel in that war with the king of Bashan is amply characterised. 1. The occasion of the war. Og came forth and gave the first assault against Israel, before they assaulted him or his people (ver. 2), together with which we are told what a formidable adversary this king was, being a man of prodigious stature, whereof a conjecture may easily be collected from the vast length of his bed (ver. 11). 2. The management of this war. (1) God doth encourage Israel with comfortable words, and enabled them to do the deed in conquering the enemy (vers. 2, 3). (2) Then Israel (thus encouraged and enabled by the Lord of Hosts) went forth in the strength of the Lord (Psa. lxxi. 16), and smote them, taking all their cities and villages, walled and unwalled, and their whole country, destroying all ages and sexes, and taking the spoil of all their cattle (vers. 4-10). 3. The event of this conquest, which was the consequence of the victory, namely, the distribution of this new conquered country to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh (vers. 12-17), and the terms upon which this country was thus distributed to those tribes (vers. 18-20), which happy event was a pledge for encouraging Joshua to be confident of all his future conquests (vers. 21, 22). From this whole history arises this following, namely, when one evil or impediment in our way to heaven is removed, God often permits another and worse to spring up for our new exercise; as it was here with Israel, no sooner had they vanquished Sihon (who stood in their way to Canaan), but immediately Og starts up to make them a new opposition. His formidable stature might have made Israel to fly, as after Goliath made them, for want of faith (1 Sam. xvii. 24). He was likely one of the remnant of those Rephaims, or giants, whom Chedorlaomer and his company of kings smote in Ashteroth (Gen. xiv. 5, with Josh. xiii. 12), for Og reigned there. (*C. Ness.*)

CHAPTER XXII.

VERS. 2-14. *Balak . . . sent messengers unto Balaam.*—*Balak's first application to Balaam; or, man and the supernatural*.—I. MEN IN DIFFICULTY SEEKING SUPERNATURAL HELP. "It was supposed that prophets and sorcerers had a power to curse persons and places so as to frustrate their counsels, enervate their strength, and fill them with dismay." 1. There is a measure of truth in this. Men have had power granted them to curse others (Gen. ix. 25; Josh. vi. 26; 2 Kings ii. 24). It is probable that Balaam had this power. 2. There is much error in the views under consideration. No man can curse those whom God hath blessed. II. MAN CONSCIOUS OF SUPERNATURAL POWERS AND OF HIS SUBJECTION TO DIVINE AUTHORITY IN THE USE OF THEM. Balaam was certainly not altogether an impostor. "In his career," says Dean Stanley, "is seen that recognition of Divine inspiration outside the chosen people which the narrowness of modern times has been so eager to deny, but which the Scriptures are always ready to acknowledge, and, by acknowledging, admit within the pale of the teachers of the Universal Church the higher spirits of every age and of every nation." But notice.—1. His consciousness of great powers. 2. His consciousness of subjection to God in the use of his powers. 3. His sin against God. III. MAN RECEIVING A SUPERNATURAL VISITATION. 1. God's access to man's mind. 2. God's interest in man's life. 3. God's authority over man's life. IV. MAN DEALING UNFAITHFULLY WITH A DIVINE COMMUNICATION. Balaam belonged to that still numerous class who theoretically know God, and who actually do fear Him, but whose love and fear of God are not the governing principles of their minds. They are convinced, but not converted. They would serve God,

but they must serve mammon also ; and in the strife between the two contending influences their lives are made bitter, and their death is perilous. V. MEN DEALING UNFAITHFULLY AS MESSENGERS. Learn—1. The Divine communications have never been limited to any one people, or country, or age. 2. Great goodness is not always associated with great gifts. “The illumination of the mind is by no means necessarily associated with the conversion of the heart.” 3. Great gifts involve great responsibility and grave peril. 4. The temptation to covetousness is of great subtlety and strength, and assails even the most gifted natures (Luke xii. 15–21). (*W. Jones.*) *Balak's motives in sending for Balaam* :—The first motive is fear, yet in Deut. ii. God forbade them to meddle with Moab, and thereupon they were driven to compass about to their great trouble. But this is the just judgment of God upon them that have not their peace made with Him, to be vexed in their minds with unnecessary fears (Lev. xxvi. 36 ; Deut. xxviii. 65, &c.). You see how small a noise will startle thieves and other malefactors. Whereupon it is said, Oh, wickedness, ever fearful. These are they that tremble at every crack of thunder. Their conscience is a continual scourge to them. The fear of the Lord is strength to the upright man, but fear shall be for the workers of iniquity, saith Solomon. 2. The second motive is envy. They were their kindred, and they should have rejoiced, turned to them, and by common prayer sought the appeasing of God. But bitter envy seeing God's favour to them, and mighty power among them, desireth rather their overthrow and confusion. They are moles in their eyes, rather than comforts to their hearts. 3. A third motive was suspicion. Balak, king of the Moabites, suspecteth this and that, according to his own fancy, and these imaginations and suspicions are as grand truths to him, making him cast this way and that to meet with imagined danger, and among other ways to resolve of sending for the sooth-sayer, or sorcerer, Balaam. Oh, suspicion, what a mischief is it amongst men ! Every man thinks his suspicion to be knowledge or little less. How many can you name that have given place to suspicion, and have not given place to error ? Yet it hurteth no man more than him that hath it, whose inwards it tormenteth, whose sleep it driveth away, whose body it alters, and consumeth the heart to very powder in the end. 4. A fourth motive to this sending for Balaam was Satan's subtlety working in Balak to take that course : for it may be observed often, that when Satan seeth open fury will not serve, then he directeth to wiles and guiles, piecing out the lion's skin that is too short with the fox's tail. (*Bp. Babington.*) *Balak and Balaam* :—The Israelites, toughened physically and morally by their long sojourn in the desert, and now well consolidated into a nation, are beginning to emerge from their southern retreat, and to betray their designs upon the regions bordering on the Jordan. They have met and defeated the desert tribes, and are now threatening Moab, which lies in their way. Balak, king of Moab, undertakes the defence of his territory, and, like a wise general, studies and adopts the tactics of his successful enemy. He has learned that the Israelites are led by Moses, a prophet of Jehovah, and that his prayers in the battle against Amalek secured the victory. He will see what of the same sort he can do on his side. Hundreds of miles away, near the head waters of the Euphrates, there lived another prophet of Jehovah, whose reputation filled the whole region. It does not concern us whether his gifts were on one side or the other of the line called supernatural ; whether his sagacity was merely extraordinary or was clarified by special, Divine light. It is enough for us that he was great, keen and lofty in his vision, comprehensive in his judgment, that he had a high sense of his prophetic function, and was at first a man of integrity. Balak sends for him. The Israelites have a prophet ; he will have a prophet. He sees in the battles hitherto fought a weight not belonging to the battalions, a spiritual force that won the victory ; he will employ that force on his side. Moses is a prophet of Jehovah ; his prophet also shall be Jehovah's. A very shrewd man is this Balak. Holding to the Oriental custom of devoting an enemy to destruction before battle, he will match his enemy even in this respect as nearly as possible. That a prophet should be found outside the Hebrew nation is simply an indication that God has witnesses in all nations ; it denies the theory that would confine all light and inspiration to one chosen people. That Balaam comes from the ancient home of Abraham hints the possibility of a still lingering monotheism in that region. Though so remote, he probably knew all about the Israelites : their history from the patriarchs down, their exodus from Egypt, their religion, their development under the guiding hand of Moses, their power in battle, and the resistless energy with which they were slowly moving up from the desert with their eyes on the rich slopes of Palestine. He doubtless knew that this was

not only a migration of a detached people, such as was now often occurring in Asia, but a migration inspired by a religion somewhat in keeping with his own. These Israelites were not his enemies, and he could not readily be made to treat them as such. When the messengers of Balak come to him with their hands full of rewards, asking him to go and curse Israel, he weighs the matter well, devotes a whole night to it, carries it to God in the simplicity of a good conscience, and refuses to go. So far he seems a true man, acting from considerations of mingled wisdom and inspiration. The messengers retrace their long journey, but Balak sends again by more honourable men and doubtless with larger gifts. He is a shrewd man, and knows what sort of a thing is the human heart. He sends not only gifts, but promises of promotion to great honour, and all by the hands of princes—a triple temptation: flattery, riches, place. How often does any man resist their united voice? Often enough he resists one of them; flattery cannot seduce him, nor money buy him, nor ambition deflect him, but when all unite—flattery dropping its sweet words into the ear, gold glittering before the eye, and ambition weaving its crown before the imagination—who stands out against these when they unite to a definite end? They had their common way with Balaam, but not at once. Such men do not go headlong and wholly over to the bad side in a moment. The undoing of a strong character is something like its upbuilding, a process of time and degree. (*T. T. Munger.*) *The seductive spirit of the world*:—The relative position of the world to the kingdom of God is substantially the same as that of Moab and Midian to Israel, now drawing near. The same enmity still remains in the world, in manifold forms; and it is the instinct of self-preservation which incites the world and its followers to do their utmost against the coming of God's kingdom among them. When force would do no good, then they resort to cunning, or to caution, that they may oppose the progress of God's cause among them in so far as it is possible; and natural enemies, such as Midian and Moab, frequently become sworn friends for a time, whenever it appears expedient to combine against the one whom both oppose. On every hand, the world looks out for allies, servants, friends; as Balak did to Balaam, she promises to bestow on you her favours and her wealth, if you but follow her behests, and make her will your own. If you refuse, as he did at the first, the world will not believe that you act but from principle—rather, she thinks that you regard self-interest; but she will give you large rewards when you but sell yourself to her. "All things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me": so spake the prince of this world to Jesus; and at every turn he modifies his voice, but still to say the same thing, in the softest tone, to all Christ's followers—nay, even to every one of His redeemed. What is it that you seek, insatiable heart—honour, or luxury, or gold? All these, if need be, may be had for almost nothing by the man whose conscience is not over scrupulous. This Balak also, like a true destroyer, rests not for an instant till he brings you where he will; and if the first attempt does not succeed, he makes a second, and a third. The world knows very well, like Balak, how to suit herself to circumstances when they change, and to attract some friends from every side. Nay, she can even, in her own time and way, be quite religious—that is, from mere policy, and ill-concealed self-interest; and if you like, she shows all possible respect for—forms. But, for your very life, ye who are striving for her praise and her reward, venture not to show that you really will obey God rather than any man! The world, if need be, will forgive you everything; but this it cannot possibly forgive—that you most earnestly believe God's Word, and give obedience to what He requires. Scarce can you show, like Balaam, that you hesitate, because the truth is much too strong for you, ere favour from the world is quite withdrawn; your name appears no longer on the list of friends, but is consigned to deep oblivion; and all the more dishonour falls on you, the greater was the honour meant for you at first. You are a most unpleasant, useless man, and quite intractable; like Balaam, you are roughly pushed aside, and told, "The Lord hath kept thee back from honour"; and then the world, instead of her intended laurel-wreath, presents you with a crown of thorns. Her love, it now appears, was nothing but fine show—her flattery, deceit. To such a world—so selfish, false, malicious, just like Balak—should you make your heart a slave? (*J. J. Van Oosterzee, D.D.*) *Possible origin of the chronicle of Balaam*:—Every reader of this book must have observed that in chaps. xxii. 2–xxiv. 25 we have an episode complete in itself; and all the modern critics who have studied this Scripture concur, I believe, in the conclusion that, in this place, the author or compiler of the book has inserted one of those ancient, detached or detachable, documents of which we find so many in the

Pentateuch. Where and how he got it is a question not easy to answer, if, indeed, answer be possible. But, from the comparatively favourable light in which the chronicle presents the facts of Balaam's story, most of our best scholars conclude that in some way he derived it from Balaam himself. We are told (chap. xxxi. 8) that, together with five Midianite chiefs, Balaam was taken prisoner by the Israelites, and put to "a judicial death" after the battle had been fought and won. A judicial death implies some sort of trial. And what more natural than that Balaam should plead in his defence the inspirations he had received from Jehovah, and the long series of blessings he had pronounced on Israel when all his interests, and perhaps also all his inclinations, prompted him to curse them? Such defences, in the East, were commonly autobiographical. Even St. Paul, when called upon to plead before kings and governors, invariably told the story of his life as his best vindication. And if Balaam, called upon to plead before Moses and the elders, told the story we now read in his chronicle—what a scene was there! What a revelation his words would convey to the leaders of Israel of the kindness of God their Saviour, of the scale on which His providence works, and of the mystery in which it is wrapped to mortal eyes! So, then, God had been working for them in the mountains of Moab, and in the heart of this great diviner from the East, and they knew it not! Knew it not? nay, perhaps were full of fear and distrust, doubting whether He Himself were able to deliver them from the perils by which they were encompassed! As Balaam unfolded his tale, how their hearts must have burned within them—burned with shame as well as with thankfulness—as they heard of interposition on their behalf of which up till now they had been ignorant, and for which at the time perchance they had not ventured to hope! Balaam may well have thought that such a story as this would plead for him more effectually than any other defence he could make. And, no doubt, it did plead for him; for we all know that it is when our hearts have been touched by some unexpected mercy that they are most easily moved to pity and forgiveness: it might even have won him absolution but for that damning sin of which nothing is said here—the infamous counsel he gave to the daughters of Midian which had deprived Israel of four-and-twenty thousand of its most serviceable and precious lives. Even with that crime full in their memories, it must have cost Moses and the elders much, one thinks, to condemn to death the man who had told them such a story as this. (*S. Cox, D.D.*)

God came unto Balaam.—*Balaam*:—In Balaam we have one of the most mysterious, in some respects one of the most puzzling, contradictory, and tragical of the characters of Holy Writ; withal one of the most instructive and interesting. He is complex; multiform in his mental and spiritual conformation, many-sided in his mental and spiritual manifestations. One man appears at one time; another and vastly different at another. You despair of catching and fixing the permanent man. I. Let me first ask attention to some PRELIMINARY POINTS WHICH MAY BE NOTED. 1. The materials on which our knowledge of him is based are chiefly contained in four passages of Scripture (Numb. xxii.—xxiv.; Micah vi. 5–8; 2 Peter ii. 12–16; Numb. xxxi.). 2. I would next note the generosity, the magnanimity, of all these Scripture notices. The whole story is told with a fineness of touch, a magnanimous silence, or the merest hint concerning his grosser sin, a generous concealment of all aggravating circumstances. It is in the Bible, and, so far as Church histories are concerned, probably in the Bible alone, that we find not only justice, but generosity, towards defeated rivals, generous tributes to what is good, generous veils of what is bad. 3. I would also call attention to the fact that there is free and full acknowledgment made of the reality and the sublimity of his inspiration. It is never denied: it is unequivocally owned. And this though Balaam was a heathen, one outside the visible Church; nay, not only outside of it, but arrayed against it. 4. Mark, too, the various opinions concerning this strange man held in different ages and by different authorities in the Church. The historian of the Jews, Josephus, styles him, in strongest language, "the first (best) of the prophets of the time"—ungrudgingly regarding him as a true prophet of the true God, but with a disposition ill adapted to meet temptation. Coming down to Christian writers, we find Ambrose and Augustine speaking of him as a magician and soothsayer, a prophet, indeed, but inspired of the devil; but we find Tertullian and Jerome, with greater and more Scriptural liberality, more favourably interpreting his position and the source of his endowments. II. Let us now proceed to THE ANALYSIS OF THE LIFE AND ITS STORY. Balaam would have protested against being called an enemy of God; would have insisted on being regarded as a friend. To every accuser he could

have replied that he was obedient all through to God's voice, that he did not go till God gave permission, and that he was careful to yield to the prophetic power that spoke through him; yet all through he was a force against God, an opponent of the purposes of grace, and on the side that could not be either for the glory of heaven or the gain of earth. And so there are men who would feel outraged if called thieves who will, all the same, sell an article for what it is not; who would deem you mad were you to accuse them of murder, yet will help a brother on to the death of his soul; who name the name of Christ, yet are forces for the meanness and avarice, the uncharity and unchastity, which the law cannot reach, but which are as far from the mind of Christ as is the theft or the murder which the law can. (*G. M. Grant, B.D.*) *The character of Balaam*:—It is common to speak of Balaam as a wicked man, to censure him as utterly devoid of principle, as completely abandoned to the dominion of evil, especially of avarice. And we have the highest authority for regarding him as a wicked man: he loved the wages of unrighteousness. But when we conceive of Balaam as a wicked man simply, we have by no means a just conception of his real character. He was not under the entire dominion of any evil principle or habit whatever. There is in him a wonderful admixture of good and evil; a combination of elements the most opposite. I. WE SEE IN BALAAM A MAN OF GREAT MENTAL ENDOWMENTS, OF VARIED SPIRITUAL GIFTS, AND OF EXTRAORDINARY ILLUMINATION. II. WE SEE IN BALAAM GREAT APPARENT DEFERENCE TO THE DIVINE WILL, AN ANXIOUS SOLICITUDE TO KNOW IT, AND TO ACT ACCORDING TO IT. III. WE HAVE IN BALAAM A MELANCHOLY INSTANCE OF AN ATTEMPT TO RECONCILE A SENSE OF DUTY TO A VICIOUS INCLINATION—TO CONFORM THE UN-YIELDING RULE OF RIGHT TO THE DESIGNS OF AVARICE. This is the instructive peculiarity of his character. He knew what was right, and for many reasons he was anxious to do it. His conscience would not allow him to act in direct opposition to the will of God; but, at the same time, his heart was not wholly in God's service. Covetousness lay deep within him. How obvious the reflection that no man knows what he is until he is tried! During the hard frosts of winter it is impossible to tell what venomous insects, what noxious weeds or beautiful flowers are concealed in the earth; but let the genial showers and sunshine of spring come, and the weeds and the flowers will show themselves, and the venomous insects will come forth out of their hiding-places. So is it with men. IV. Another remark, suggested by the character and history of Balaam, relates to THE RAPID AND FEARFUL PROGRESS OF SIN. So it was with Judas: he had not the slightest wish to injure his Lord; he wished only to obtain the thirty pieces of silver. So it has been with many ambitious monarchs: they have had no pleasure in the misery of their fellow-creatures; they have thought only of their own fame and power. So it has been with many zealous persecutors: they have no natural thirst for human blood; they have thought only of the establishment of their creed—the extension and honour of their Church. So it is with many in common life: they have no wish to injure others; but they wish to secure their own ends, and they do not hesitate to trample on those who stand in their way. V. IN THE CHARACTER AND HISTORY OF BALAAM WE HAVE A STRIKING ILLUSTRATION OF THE DECEITFULNESS OF THE HUMAN HEART. Men will neglect the moral, and yet will attend to the ceremonial, and on this ground will think themselves clear; they will commit the greater, and yet will hesitate to commit the less, and on this ground will pronounce themselves pure; they will violate the entire spirit of the Christian law, and yet will scrupulously observe the letter of some precept or precedent, and on this ground will pronounce themselves consistent Christians. VI. THE HISTORY OF BALAAM ILLUSTRATES SOME VERY IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES OF THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT. The present is a state of probation, but there is in it not a little that is retributive; and though God deals with us as a kind parent, there is often much that is judicial in His proceedings. We have a striking illustration of this in the history of Balaam. In his heart Balaam desired permission to go with the princes of Moab, because he coveted the wages of unrighteousness; and God gave him that permission. This was not an act of mercy, but of judgment. The history of Balaam illustrates another principle of the Divine government—that which is involved in the statement, "The way of transgressors is hard." This is as much in mercy as in judgment. The history of Balaam also illustrates the solemn truth, that the "wages of sin is death." "Balaam also, the son of Beor, they slew with the sword." Whatever may be the result here, the ultimate end of such a course as that which we have endeavoured to describe must be destruction. (*J. J. Davies.*) *Balaam*:—Balaam is one of those instances which meet us in Scripture of persons

dwelling, to a certain extent, in the gloom of heathenish practices, while preserving at the same time a certain knowledge of the one true God. He was endowed with a greater than ordinary knowledge of God; he had the intuition of truth, and could see into the life of things; he was, in fact, a poet and a prophet. Moreover, he confessed that all these superior advantages were not his own, but derived from God, and were His gift. Thus, doubtless, he had won for himself among his contemporaries a high reputation not only for wisdom and knowledge, but also for sanctity. And although his sanctity comes to very little in the end, when his besetting sin overmastered him, yet it may be readily understood that, judged by the standards which prevailed among the heathen nomad tribe which sent for him to curse the nation of Israel, he would appear to be an eminently holy man, so much so that, as Balak said to him at their first interview, "I wot that he whom thou blestest is blessed, and that he whom thou cursest is cursed." But then, it may be asked, if Balaam was looked upon as a holy man and as a worshipper of Jehovah, how came Balak to send for him and to offer him vast rewards to curse the people of Jehovah? The answer is, that it was not uncommon among those heathen nations—nor is the practice even now unknown among pagan tribes—to offer sacrifices to the gods of the enemy to propitiate them to themselves. The ancient Romans repeatedly did this. Doubtless there were many professed enchanters and soothsayers in the land of Moab; but king Balak—perhaps having previously tried these without success—may have preferred sending five hundred miles for a renowned prophet who had the reputation of more than mortal wisdom and power, who was also a worshipper of Jehovah, and who might for that reason be all the more likely to propitiate His anger, or to turn Him against that strange people which had "come out of Egypt," and now, marching with unearthly tokens along the desert, had pitched their tents within sight of the strongholds where Balak had his habitation. Consider now the first message which the renowned soothsayer received from the terrified king. Clearly he wished to go, and was disappointed and chagrined at being prevented. But why should he feel any disappointment? We might have been at a loss to know, had it not been for the ray of inspired light shed upon the whole narrative by a single line from the pen of the Apostle Peter. That apostle tells us that "he loved the wages of unrighteousness." He did not particularly like the work, but he loved the wages. Like many another covetous soul, if he could have grasped the wages without doing the devil's work, he would have preferred it; and he loved the wages so well that, although he at first refused to go, yet presently we find him venturing on the work for the sake of getting the pay. 1. Mark here, then, the first, the earliest effect of cherishing any besetting sin. It is that God is served reluctantly. Sin is looked at with a longing eye. The prohibition seems hard and unreasonable. 2. Mark now the second application made by Balak, in which the unhappy prophet, who has begun by grumbling at God's will, is placed in further and severer temptation. I cannot but pity him here, as we pity many another poor slave who makes just one momentary effort to break off his chains. Or perhaps the speech with which he met the second deputation from Moab was artfully intended to enhance the value of subsequent compliance—we cannot certainly tell. But at all events he protests manfully: "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more." So also Peter valiantly protested when his Master was about to be betrayed: "Though all men should deny Thee, though I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee." Yet within a few short hours Peter had denied his Master thrice; and within a few short hours Balaam was on his way to the borders of Moab. The difference between the two cases is that Peter at once went out, wept bitterly, and received forgiveness; whereas Balaam, having started on a career of covetousness, never retraced his steps, and is set forth to us in the lurid light portrayed by St. Jude, "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." We have seen that the first effect of besetting sin is that the Lord is served reluctantly. The next effect is that pretences are sought for its indulgence, or at least for putting ourselves in the way of it. The second time that God appears to Balaam there seems to be a permission to go, though coupled with a warning that he would say nothing but what the Lord should command. It by no means follows that because Balaam received a kind of permission to go, that his journey had the Divine approval. The Lord answers our prayers sometimes as He answered the prayers of Israel for a king, in His anger; nor is it easy for a greater curse to come upon a man than to be left to the gratification of his own selfish and sinful desires. Let us pray that God Almighty would cross our most cherished purposes, and defeat

our darling projects, rather than suffer us in our own self-willed perverseness to enter upon a path in defiance of His holy will. St. Peter speaks of Balaam's going with the princes of Moab as madness and iniquity: he "was rebuked for his iniquity; the dumb ass, speaking with man's voice, forbade the madness of the prophet." And is this the man who so boldly declared that he would not turn aside from the will of God one hair's-breadth if Balak would give him his house full of silver and gold? Poor human nature! How little do even great men know themselves! How small the importance to be attached to mere profession! How are people likely to deceive themselves and to deceive others when speaking what is called their experience, but which is sometimes only a strong emotion of the moment, to be displaced or destroyed by the first attack of temptation! How often has it happened that those who make the loudest profession of their virtue, and of their love to the cause of God, are the first to succumb to covetousness or other besetting sin! And now the narrative, in opening before us a fresh scene, suggests at the same time a further view of the progress of a besetting sin. How striking is the circumstance that, although the ass, on three several occasions, saw the Angel with drawn sword standing in the way, Balaam saw Him not! God, says St. Augustine, had punished his cupidity, by according to him a permission conformable to his wicked inclination; and we see in him all the corruption of the human heart, and all the depravation of a will enslaved to a dominant lust. Other interpreters maintain that his permission to go was on the understood condition that he was not to curse Israel; and that it was because his heart, craving after the gold, was already wavering from this purpose, that the Angel of the Covenant accused him of perverseness, and having given him a striking and solemn warning, suffered him again to go forward. I confess that this view of the case commends itself to my own judgment. 3. But whichever view you adopt, the blindness of this perverse prophet is equally monitory. He appears before us a type of those well-instructed sinners whom every one except themselves sees to be running to their own ruin, blinded by the fascination of covetousness or some other master sin. After this Balaam is given up to his own heart's lust—the last and most terrific result, in this life, of the indulgence of besetting sin. "Go with the men," the Lord says to him, giving him up to his own heart's lusts, which he followed to his destruction. "Go with the men"—when neither the first words of God who forbade him, nor the signs and dangers which met him by the way, could turn his heart or deliver him from his error, the Lord bids him to go on—as Jarchi, the Jew, well paraphrases the words—"Go with the men, for thy portion is with them, and thine end to perish out of the world." (*L. H. Wiseman.*) *Balaam*:—Balaam was certainly a heathen soothsayer and diviner (*Josh. xiii. 22*). But he was more than a mere soothsayer. He had certainly, for one thing, a very full knowledge of the character of God. Thus, he again and again employs, in speaking of God, that covenant name "Jehovah" (*chap. xxii. 8, 13, 18, 19; chap. xxiii. 3, 8, 12, 21, 26; chap. xxiv. 1, 6, 13*), by which He was specially made known to Israel (*Exod. vi. 2, 3*). And such terms as, "the Lord my God" (*chap. xxii. 18*); the "Almighty" (*chap. xxiv. 4*); "the most High" (*chap. xxiv. 16*), also occur in the course of his utterances, implying, by the variety of expression so easily adopted, a very much wider acquaintance with the Divine character than is commonly supposed to belong to ordinary heathens. Nor was the knowledge which Balaam possessed of the character of God a merely verbal or speculative knowledge. It is manifest that he stood in certain intimate personal relations with Jehovah. He speaks of the Lord as "the Lord *his* God" (*chap. xxii. 18*); and the whole tenor of his intercourse with Jehovah, on this occasion, implies a previous acquaintance with God—such an acquaintance with God, indeed, as almost presupposes previous immediate communications between God and himself. And it may have been, that his extraordinary reputation as a prophet had arisen from the fact that God had, from time to time, "put words into his mouth," which he had spoken, and which had also come to pass. Nor is there wanting in the character of Balaam a certain tone of high religious feeling also. He has the profoundest reverence for the authority and word of God. The word that God putteth into his mouth, that will he speak! Nay, nor would he, though Balak should give him his house full of silver and gold, go beyond the word of the Lord, &c. Nor must we deny to Balaam a certain personal and spiritual sympathy with the truths he uttered in God's name. (*See chap. xxiii. 10; xxiv. 23.*) "He, too, is borne away, at least for a time, by the grandeur of the announcements he is making. There is that in him which reaches out with a true, although too transient, yearning after the coming triumphs of the people and king-

dom of God." We must not paint this portrait wholly black. An honest and a truthful man; an independent and (in a certain sense) high-minded man; a God-fearing and religious man: such is Balaam, the son of Beor, of Pethor, on one side of his character. And yet he is a bad man, despite his many virtues, and a man who finally perished miserably with the enemies of God's people. A strange phenomenon, indeed, this Balaam! a heathen soothsayer and an inspired servant of the Lord; a man full of richest endowments, animated by many very noble impulses, uttering the most exalted sentiments; and yet a man whose heart was rotten at the core, whose life is only written as a warning against sin, whose death was an unmitigated tragedy. I. WE SEE HERE, IN THE FACT OF BALAAM'S INSPIRATION, ALTHOUGH HE WAS A HEATHEN SOOTHSAYER, AN EVIDENCE AND WITNESS TO THE WIDER RELATIONS THAT GOD HOLDS WITH MAN THAN IS SOMETIMES SUPPOSED. The fact is, it hath pleased God, for His own most wise and gracious purposes, gradually and slowly to mature His final plan of mercy for the world in Jesus Christ; and, with a view to its completeness and maturity, to confine it, at the first, within restricted lines of influence. But it is a monstrous, heathen notion to suppose that all the while this final plan of mercy was in course of development, the great, wide world, without the parallels in which it moved, was utterly neglected and forsaken of its God. No! the world was also being educated, in its way, as well as the Church: educated on a humbler method, and with more "rudimentary" instruction, but educated; and educated of God. Two lines of culture, then, have been going on in the world, side by side, under the providential direction of the Most High God, and with a view to the ultimate salvation of the world. A primary and rudimentary culture, under what Paul calls the "elements of the world," consisting of the ordinary course of Providence, with occasional interpositions of sovereign grace and special instances of inspiration; and a systematic and formal culture for a selected portion of the human family, under the written law of God, with constant interpositions of sovereign grace, and almost constant inspiration. II. THAT, IN DEALING WITH MEN BY HIS SPIRIT, THE LORD HAS REGARD TO THE MORAL AND SPIRITUAL STANDPOINT AT WHICH EACH MAN MAY BE FOUND. Balaam is a soothsayer, and yet he is inspired of God! Balaam seeks the Lord by means of enchantments, and yet the Lord does not refuse to come to him, but responds to his appeal again and again! But, then, it is to be considered that Balaam was a heathen, and that he had been brought up in the midst of the practice of divination, if he had not, indeed, inherited his position as a diviner from his father. It was plainly one thing for such a man as Balaam to employ enchantment, and quite another for an Israelite to do so. For to Israel, if I may so speak, was given a diviner angury—in God's law, and in God's presence in their midst; and so to them the use of all these heathen arts was absolutely interdicted (Deut. xviii. 9-14). But, as the art of divination was the highest point to which the heathen world had been able to attain in their pursuit of the unseen, so God condescended to meet Balaam, at that special point of spiritual culture, that He might lead him thenceforth to higher forms of truth and nobler modes of worship. III. HOW BROAD IS THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN SPIRITUAL ENDOWMENTS AND SPIRITUAL CHARACTER. Balaam was both an inspired man, and also, at the same time, a very wicked man. He gave expression to the noblest sentiments, and yet performed the basest deeds. See, then, how little mere endowments, even of the highest kind, can do for us; how widely separated from each other are gifts and graces. The gifts which we receive from God are, in reality, no proper part of us, until we make them ours by a right use of them. And our character is measured, not so much by the number of talents we have received, as by the fidelity we have exhibited in the employment of the talents we have. It by no means follows because we have spiritual faculties that we are spiritual men. These faculties are given to us beforehand to aid our usefulness, if we become spiritual men, and in the hope, as one may say, that we shall become spiritual men. But, for all our gifts, we may still be "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." It is quite possible for divinely-bestowed gifts to miss their object and intention! (*W. Roberts.*) *Balaam tempted*:—I. In the first place observe THAT THERE IS NO TIME OF MAN'S LIFE WHEREIN HE MAY NOT BE TEMPTED, or may not be in danger of falling off from God and goodness; which should be an argument to us for constant care and watchfulness over ourselves. Even those whom God hath favoured in a very particular manner, and with heavenly gifts and graces, are no more secure than others, if they take not proportionable care. II. Observe NOW DANGEROUS A THING IT IS SO MUCH AS TO ATTEND OR LISTEN TO THE CHARMES OF WEALTH AND HONOUR. For a gift will sometimes blind the wise, and a bribe will beguile

their hearts. Balaam looked too much upon the golden presents, and was too sensibly struck with the sound of honour and preferments; which made him the less consider upon how slippery ground he stood, and how dangerous an affair that was to concern himself in. III. Observe, that when God sees men leaning too far to ambitious or covetous desires, and not wise enough to take such gentle hints as might be sufficient to call them back, HE THEN LEAVES THEM TO PURSUE THEIR OWN HEARTS' LUSTS, AND LETS THEM FOLLOW THEIR OWN IMAGINATION. IV. Observe next, HOW FOOLISH A PART A MAN ACTS, and how he exposes himself to contempt and scorn, as well as danger, WHEN HE TAKES UPON HIM TO FOLLOW HIS OWN WAY AND HUMOUR, AND WILL NOT HAVE GOD FOR HIS GUIDE. V. Observe, further, that when once wilful men have run such lengths in opposition to the will of Heaven, GOD THEN GIVES THEM UP TO A REPROBATE MIND, AND LETS THEM FALL FROM ONE DEGREE OF WICKEDNESS TO ANOTHER. So it was in Balaam. VI. One thing more we may observe from his history, which is this: THAT THE SPIRIT OF GOD MAY SOMETIMES VOUCHSAFE TO COME UPON A VERY WICKED MAN (so far as concerns the extraordinary gifts) WITHOUT REFORMING OR INFLUENCING THE SAME MAN AS TO HIS LIFE AND MORALS, in the way of ordinary operation. These two things are very distinct, and may often be separate, as in Balaam at that time, and in Judas afterwards. (*D. Waterland, D.D.*)

Apostasy.—I. THE PIETY OF BALAAM. 1. The spiritual enlightenment of Balaam evinces his piety. 2. Balaam's piety is seen in his distinctly recognising the supreme authority of the will of God. 3. The piety of Balaam was manifested in his obedience to the will of God. II. THE APOSTASY OF BALAAM. 1. The means through which Balaam was induced to apostatise must not be overlooked. He was enticed by worldly wealth and distinction. Principle is surrendered, honour lost, the soul itself bartered for the wages of unrighteousness. Such was "the error of Balaam." And who knows not that by this very means multitudes have been seduced from their integrity, and lost for ever? Like the fabled Atalanta, while they were running well, the golden apple was thrown at their feet, tempting them; and stooping from their high principles to take it up, they have lost the race. 2. Mark the progress of Balaam's apostasy. First, we notice the indulgence of evil desire—desire for gain and honour, which could only be obtained by wrongdoing; his heart goes after covetousness. Next he tampers with temptation. The reiterated overtures of Balak should have been indignantly rejected. Why are these ambassadors received even a second time? Why another and another audience granted to them? Alas! he is fascinated by the very means of his ruin: like a silly fish, he is playing about the bait. Then, how he struggles with conscience! Guard against the beginnings of evil. If the downward career of apostasy be once commenced, whether thou mayest be hurried, to what depths of degradation thou mayest fall, God only knows. Like the swine of the Gadarenes, thou mayest be driven onward, literally possessed by the devil, until plunged into the abyss below. Oh how deeply have some fallen! from small beginnings degenerating to the darkest crimes—crimes which are a loathing and an abhorrence. "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?"—but, as a quaint writer saith, "the dog did it." We may start from the line of rectitude at a very small angle, the divergence becoming gradually wider and wider, till we are as far from righteousness as hell is from heaven. 3. Consider the checks which presented themselves in the way of Balaam's apostasy, but which he obstinately resisted and overtrod. What pains the gracious Lord taketh to prevent our self-destruction! To the truth of this every backslider is witness. How powerful an obstacle is conscience, which ever and anon raiseth its voice, and will be heard, like the voice of the Lord which thundereth! Death, too, like a spectre from the invisible world, again and again obtrudes itself on the apostate's guilty soul. Dumb things have a voice to him that hath ears to hear, rebuking our madness. 4. Contemplate the issue of Balaam's apostasy. It entailed immense mischief upon others. Through him thousands of the Lord's people perished. At the same time his fall issued in woeful disappointment to himself. (*J. Heaton.*) **What men are these with thee?**—*God's interest in man's companionships*:—This question was designed to awaken "the slumbering conscience of Balaam, to lead him to reflect upon the proposal which the men had made, and to break the force of his sinful inclination." God addresses the same question to the young who are forming dangerous associations, to Christians who take pleasure in worldly society, &c. He urges this solemn inquiry (1) by the voice of conscience; (2) by the preaching of His truth; (3) by the exhortations and admonitions of His Word; and (4) by the remonstrances of His Spirit. This inquiry indicates the Divine concern as to human companionships. We may regard this concern as—I. AN INDICATION OF

THE DIVINE SOLICITUDE FOR THE WELL-BEING OF MAN. II. AN INDICATION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR COMPANIONSHIPS. 1. Our associates indicate our character. "A man is known by the company which he keeps." 2. Our associates influence our character. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise : but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." III. AN INDICATION OF OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO GOD FOR OUR COMPANIONSHIPS. IV. AN INDICATION OF THE DANGER OF DALLYING WITH TEMPTATION. (*W. Jones.*) *Evil company to be avoided* :—Flee unholy company as baneful to the power of godliness. Be but as careful for thy soul as thou wouldst be for thy body. Durst thou drink in the same cup, or sit in the same chair, with one that hath an infectious disease? And is not sin as catching a disease as the plague itself? Of all trades, it would not do well to have the collier and the fuller live together; what one cleanseth, the other will blacken and defile. Thou canst not be long among unholy ones but thou wilt hazard the defiling of thy soul, which the Holy Spirit hath made pure. (*W. Gurnall.*) *The Lord refuseth to give me leave.*—*Hesitating to do right* :—Whence this mingled petulance and feebleness? Plainly Balaam wants to go with the princes of Balak, and he is irritated that he cannot go; and so, first of all, he vents his spleen upon the men who were the innocent occasion of his disappointment. And yet, in the midst of all his anger, he cannot bring himself to utter such decisive words as shall foreclose for ever the prospects of advancement opened up to him by Balak. There can be no mistaking the spirit of this language. It is at once both insolent and hesitating; it is abrupt, and yet circuitous. There are deeply agitating influences at work upon the mind of him who, yesterday, a master of wise speech and full of graceful hospitality, can say to inoffensive guests, "Get you into your own land; for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you." Here, then, we first catch sight of Balaam's weakness and infirmity. The prospect of emolument in the discharge of his prophetic office had excited his cupidity. When he first saw the rewards of divination he was, perhaps, scarcely conscious of their influence upon his mind. So long as the question of his going with the men was undecided, he betrayed no agitation on the subject; but now that these rewards were passing out of his reach—now that he was absolutely forbidden to do anything that would secure them, a passionate desire to be possessed of them was stirred within his breast, and unmistakably betrayed itself in his behaviour towards the men to whom he had promised to communicate the answer of the Lord. (*W. Roberts.*)

Vers. 15-35. *If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them.*—*No contradiction between God's two answers to Balaam* :—The first time God tells him not to go; the second time He bids him go, but is angry with him because he goes. What does this contradiction mean? There is no meaning in it till we drop the external shell of the story, and look at the moral working of Balaam's mind, when all becomes orderly and natural. There is here no contradiction. Between the first and second asking there is a change in his moral attitude. In the first he is doile and obedient, and the voice of conscience, which is the voice of God, prevails and decides his conduct. He enters into the second already half won by Balak, dislodged from his old sympathies, restless under the comparison between his old life and that laid open to him. When men revolve moral questions in such a temper, they commonly reach a decision that accords with their wish rather than with their conscience. Balaam has abandoned the field of simple duty—duty so plain that there is no need of second thoughts. It is clear enough that in no way could it be right to curse those whom God had blessed; this he well knows, and the spontaneous verdict of his conscience is God's first answer. But, brooding over the matter and sore pressed by temptation, he begins to contrive ways in which he may win the gifts and honours of Balak, and also remain an honest prophet. Here is his mistake. Duty is no longer a simple, imperative thing, but something that may be conjured with, a subordinate, unstable tool instead of an absolute law. Having thus blinded himself as to the nature of duty, there will no longer be any certainty in his moral operations; confusion of thought leads to confusion of action; in his own transformation he transforms God; he now hears God bidding him do what he desires to do. Still, at times, conscience revives, his judgment returns, and then he knows that God is angry with him for doing what he had brought himself to think he might rightly do. This is every-day experience put into this ancient story in a dramatic yet real way. When a man has thus trifled with himself and with his duty, God does indeed seem to say to him, "Go on in your chosen course." He serves God in the externals of religion, but in business cheats and lies in what

he calls business ways, and grinds the faces of the poor under some theory of competition, yet God prospers him; no hindering word comes to him from Providence or from the insulted Spirit of truth. It may be better, it may be, in a certain sense, the command of God, that one who starts on such a path shall follow it to the end, and find out by experience what he has rejected as an intuition. With the froward God shows Himself froward. To those who have pleasure in unrighteousness God sends a strong delusion that they should believe a lie. This is the concrete way of stating how the moral nature acts when it is led by double motives. It comes into bewilderment; it gets no true answers when it appeals to God; its own sophistries seem to it the voice of God. It can no longer tell the voice of God from its own voice. "Fair is foul, and foul is fair." (*T. T. Munger.*) *God answers men as they wish*:—It is not unusual with God to grant, not only the desires of an holy and upright mind, but also our desires for inferior things, when the heart is set upon them in preference to Himself. For instance, a man is on his guard against the dangers of wealth and station; but by degrees he thinks whether he cannot obtain them lawfully, and by and by he is engaged in the pursuit, and in such a case God gives the man usually that for which he craves. He seeks, he obtains; God seems to say, "Go on." There is no greater danger than for God to answer a man according to the desires of his own heart; and therefore Job says, "If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands towards Him; if iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away" (Job xi. 14). And in Ezekiel God says, if a man comes to inquire of Him with idols in his heart, and setting the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his face, He will answer him according to his idols, he will be taken in his own heart. "If that prophet be deceived," it is added in very remarkable words, "I the Lord have deceived him, and I will punish him" (Ezek. xiv. 4, 5, 9). But yet in this case God does not give us up altogether. As when Israel asked for a king, He gave indeed what they desired—but He expostulated, He warned, He sent them a token of His displeasure. So will He show us by His Providence that He is displeased with us; in the way that we go, His angel with the sword in his hand will meet us, *i.e.*, some calamity, some accident, some grief, is sure to cross our way to remind us from God that the way that we are going is not the way of holiness or of peace. And these are all calls from God, not at all the less so because when a man's eyes are blinded with worldly business and covetousness he does not see them to be such. (*Isaac Williams, B.D.*) *Balaam; or, spiritual influence, human and Divine*:—I. THE INFLUENCE OF A BAD MAN UPON SOCIETY. 1. A man's influence in this world is no proof of his moral worth. The millions of all ages readily accede to the claims of the pretender, however lofty; and the more lofty the better, if the claimant can manage to keep his countenance while the admiring dupes look on. 2. Society, in relation to true intelligence and right sympathy, is in a very lamentable state. A true education, involving the harmonious unfolding of the feeling as well as knowing faculties of the soul, will make a man a "discerner of spirits." 3. The high probability of a future retributive economy. Does not the mutual relation between empty pretenders and the ignorant victims of all ages predict a reckoning day, and cry out for a judgment? II. THE INFLUENCE OF THE GREAT GOD UPON A BAD MAN (VER. 18). 1. God does exert a spiritual influence over the minds of bad men. 2. The spiritual influence He exerts over the minds of bad men is of a restraining character. (1) External difficulties. (2) Inward pressure upon the spirit. 3. God's restraining influence upon a bad man is for the good of society. (*Homilist.*) *Balak's second application to Balaam; or, the decrease of resistance to evil*:—I. THE REPETITION WITH INCREASED FORCE OF THE REQUEST OF BALAK TO BALAAM. 1. The embassy was more influential. 2. The message was more urgent. 3. The inducements were stronger. Learn: that temptations which have been declined half-heartedly are presented again, and with greater force. The manner of Balaam's dismissal of the former messengers prepared the way for a repetition of their mission. II. THE REPETITION UNDER AGGRAVATING CIRCUMSTANCES OF GUILTY DELAY BY BALAAM. 1. He had been challenged by God as to the presence of the former messengers. 2. He had already been prohibited from complying with the request of Balak. 3. He himself felt and plainly declared that he was bound by the word of the Lord in the matter. III. THE REPETITION OF THE DIVINE VISIT TO BALAAM. 1. The permission granted. 2. The condition enforced. IV. THE SETTING OUT OF BALAAM ON THE JOURNEY. (*W. Jones.*) *The character of Balaam*:—We take this to be the great crisis in Balaam's life. We take this act, which to many appears so excellent, to be the first step in his downward course. It was not only the day of God's power towards Israel, but a day of

grace to Balaam ; but, alas ! he knew it not. The precious moment on which so much depended was lost ; henceforth his downward course was rapid. He perished in the rejection of grace and mercy. There is a crisis in our histories as in Balaam's, a time, perhaps a moment, on which our eternity depends. There may be nothing to mark it out as a great crisis at the time. The Spirit of God may strive with you, gently strive. There may be some conviction in your mind, and all may depend on your yielding up your heart to Christ, and acting upon that conviction at once. If you waver when you ought to act ; wait for more light, when you have light enough ; if you allow any second thought to come in to determine what you shall do, anything selfish or worldly, when you ought to act simply for God, then the Spirit may leave you ; your day of grace, like Balaam's, may pass by, or it may be some temptation which is presented to you. We do not mean any awful temptation, one which the world itself would counsel you to resist. It may be some offer which you would be deemed foolish in rejecting, something that the world thinks an advantage ; and yet if you do give way to the temptation, oh, what unforeseen consequences may follow, step by step, with unerring certainty ! Let it now be impressed upon your hearts what great and eternal consequences may depend upon one little act. Oh, be faithful to God, faithful in apparently little things, as well as in great. But we must go a step further and ask, "What was it that gave this bias to Balaam's will, and led him still to inquire, when he ought to have felt, 'God has revealed His will ; it is enough. I will not move from my place ?'" Scripture gives a complete answer to that question. It was a besetting sin, and we are told what it was. It was the sin of covetousness (2 Pet. iii. 15). There are two most solemn lessons which this ought to rivet on our hearts. First, we see the amazing power and awful effects of one besetting sin. We see how it perverts the will, how it keeps the heart from resting on the plain word of God—how it leads to neglect, yea, not even to know, the day of visitation—and how it hurries the soul onward, blinded and debased, to a point at which at first it would have shuddered. The other lesson is the deceitfulness of the human heart. Its wishes may be quite opposite to its most solemn professions ; and at the very moment when it seems to be guided by the will of God it may be following some device or desire of its own. To what earnest self-inspection should this character lead us, lest our hearts, too, should be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin—lest, satisfied with a decided profession, we forget that God is the searcher of the heart, and that He deals and will deal with us, not according to what we profess to be, but according to what we are, according to the real state of our hearts. (*G. Wagner.*) *Perversion as shown in the character of Balaam :—*

I. PERVERSION OF GREAT GIFTS. 1. By turning them to purposes of self-aggrandisement. Balak struck the keynote of his character when he said, "Am I not able to promote thee unto honour?" Herein, then, lies the first perversion of glorious gifts : that Balaam sought not God's honour, but his own. 2. By making those gifts subservient to his own greed. **II. PERVERSION OF CONSCIENCE.** 1. The first intimation we have of the fact that Balaam was tampering with his conscience, is in his second appeal to God. There is nothing like the first glance we get at duty, before there has been any special pleading of our affections or inclinations. Duty is never uncertain at first. It is only after we have got involved in the sophistries of wishing that things were otherwise than they are that it seems indistinct. Considering a duty is often only explaining it away. Deliberation is often only dishonesty. God's guidance is plain, when we are true. 2. The second stage is a state of hideous contradictions : God permits Balaam to go, and then is angry with him for going. There is nothing here which cannot be interpreted by bitter experience. We must not explain it away by saying that these were only the alternations of Balaam's own mind. They were ; but they were the alternations of a mind with which God was expostulating, and to which God appeared differently at different times ; the horrible mazes and inconsistencies of a spirit which contradicts itself, and strives to disobey the God whom yet it feels and acknowledges. To such a state of mind God becomes a contradiction. "With the froward"—oh, how true!—"Thou wilt show Thyself froward." 3. We notice next the evidences in him of a disordered mind and heart. It is a strange, sad picture. The first man in the land, gifted beyond most others, conscious of great mental power, going on to splendid prospects, yet with hopelessness and misery working at his heart. Who would have envied Balaam if he could have seen all—the hell that was working at his heart? 4. Lastly, let us consider the impossibility under such circumstances of going back. Balaam offers to go back. The angel says, "Go on." There was yet one hope for him, to be true, to utter God's words careless of the consequences ; but he who had been

false so long, how should he be true? It was too late. In the ardour of youth you have made perhaps a wrong choice, or chosen an unfit profession, or suffered yourself weakly and passively to be drifted into a false course of action, and now, in spite of yourself, you feel there is no going back. To many minds, such a lot comes as with the mysterious force of a destiny. They see themselves driven, and forget that they put themselves in the way of the stream that drives them. They excuse their own acts as if they were coerced. They struggle now and then faintly, as Balaam did—try to go back—cannot—and at last sink passively in the mighty current that floats them on to wrong. And thenceforth to them all God's intimations will come unnaturally. His voice will sound as that of an angel against them in the way. Spectral lights will gleam, only to show a quagmire from which there is no path of extrication. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*)

Obedience without love, as instanced in the character of Balaam:—I. BALAAM WAS BLESSED WITH GOD'S ESPECIAL FAVOUR. 1. He had the grant of inspiration. 2. The knowledge of God's will. 3. An insight into the truths of morality, clear and enlarged, such as we Christians even cannot surpass. 4. He was admitted to conscious intercourse with God, such as even Christians have not. II. BALAAM WAS A VERY CONSCIENTIOUS MAN. 1. When sought by Balak he prayed to God for direction. 2. When forbidden to go, he refused to go. 3. Only when God gave him leave did he go. 4. And when he was come to Balak he strictly adhered to God's orders. Balaam was certainly high-principled, honourable, conscientious. He said, and he did; he professed, and he acted according to his professions. III. Yet, while in one sense in God's favour, HE WAS IN ANOTHER AND HIGHER SENSE UNDER GOD'S DISPLEASURE. He was displeasing to God amid his many excellences. So that, in Balaam's history, we seem to have the following remarkable case—*i.e.*, remarkable according to our customary judgment of things—a man Divinely favoured, visited, influenced, guided, protected, eminently honoured, illuminated—a man possessed of an enlightened sense of duty, and of moral and religious acquirements, educated, high-minded, conscientious, honourable, firm; and yet on the side of God's enemies, personally under God's displeasure, and in the end (if we go on to that) the direct instrument of Satan, and having his portion with the unbelievers. This surely is most fearful to every one of us—the more fearful the more we are conscious to ourselves in the main of purity of intention in what we do, and conscientious adherence to our sense of duty. IV. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS STARTLING EXHIBITION OF GOD'S WAYS? 1. It is possible to be generally conscientious, or what the world calls honourable and high-principled, yet to be destitute of that religious fear and strictness which God calls conscientiousness, but which the world calls superstition or narrowness of mind. 2. God gave Balaam leave to go to Balak, and then was angry with him for going, because his asking twice was tempting God. God is a jealous God. We may not safely intrude upon Him, and make free with Him. Concluding lessons: 1. We see how little we can depend, in judging of right and wrong, on the apparent excellence and high character of individuals. 2. Observe the wonderful secret providence of God, while all things seem to go on according to the course of this world. 3. When we have begun an evil course we cannot retrace our steps. 4. God gives us warnings now and then, but does not repeat them. Balaam's sin consisted in not acting upon what was told him once for all. Beware of trifling with conscience. May He give you grace so to hear as you will wish to have heard when life is over—to hear in a practical way, with a desire to profit—to learn God's will and to do it! (*J. H. Newman, D.D.*)

Balaam:—We, in these days, are accustomed to draw a sharp line between the good and the bad, the converted and the unconverted, the children of God and the children of this world, those who have God's Spirit and those who have not, which we find nowhere in Scripture; and therefore when we read of such a man as Balaam we cannot understand him. He knows the true God. More, he has the Spirit of God in him, and thereby utters wonderful prophecies; and yet he is a bad man. How can that be? Now bear in mind, first, that Balaam is no impostor or magician. He is a wise man, and a prophet of God. God really speaks to him, and really inspires him. And bear in mind, too, that Balaam's inspiration did not merely open his mouth to say wonderful words which he did not understand, but opened his heart to say righteous and wise things which he did understand. What, then, was wrong in Balaam? This, that he was double-minded. He wished to serve God. True. But he wished to serve himself by serving God, as too many do in all times. That was what was wrong with him—self-seeking; and the Bible story brings out that self-seeking with a delicacy, and a perfect

knowledge of human nature, which ought to teach us some of the secrets of our own hearts. But what may we learn from this ugly story? Recollect what I said at first, that we should find Balaam too like many people nowadays; perhaps too like ourselves. Too like indeed. For never were men more tempted to sin as Balaam did than in these days, when religion is all the fashion, and pays a man, and helps him on in life; when, indeed, a man cannot expect to succeed without professing some sort of religion or other. Thereby comes a terrible temptation to many men. I do not mean to hypocrites, but to really well-meaning men. They like religion. They wish to be good; they have the feeling of devotion. They pray, they read their Bibles, they are attentive to services and to sermons, and are more or less pious people. But soon—too soon—they find that their piety is profitable. Their business increases. Their credit increases. They gain power over their fellow men. What a fine thing it is, they think, to be pious! Then creeps in the love of the world; the love of money, or power, or admiration; and they begin to value religion because it helps them to get on in the world. Aye, they are often more attentive than ever to religion, because their consciences pinch them at times, and have to be dragged by continual church-goings and chapel-goings, and readings and prayings, in order that they may be able to say to themselves with Balaam, “Thus saith Balaam, he who heard the word of God, and had the knowledge of the Most High.” So they say to themselves, “I must be right. How religious I am; how fond of sermons, and of church services, and missionary meetings, and charitable institutions, and everything that is good and pious. I must be right with God.” Deceiving their own selves, and saying to themselves, “I am rich and increased with goods, I have need of nothing,” and not knowing that they are wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked. Would God that such people, of whom there are too many, would take St. John’s warning and buy of the Lord gold tried in the fire—the true gold of honesty—that they may be truly rich, and anoint their eyes with eye-salve that they may see themselves for once as they are. (*C. Kingsley, M.A.*) *Trifling with conscience*:—What was Balaam’s prime mistake? I think it was this, that he trifled with his conscience. God speaks once to the human soul, and speaks loudly; but if you disobey His voice, it soon sinks to a whisper. “When I was a little boy,” said Theodore Parker, “in my fourth year, one fine day in spring my father led me by the hand to a distant part of the farm, but soon sent me home alone. On the way I had to pass a little pond, then spreading its waters wide; a rhodora in full bloom, a rare flower which grew only in that locality, attracted my attention, and drew me to the spot. I saw a little spotted tortoise sunning itself in the shallow water at the root of the flowering shrub. I lifted the stick I had in my hand to strike the harmless reptile; for though I had never killed any creature, yet I had seen other boys out of sport destroy birds and squirrels and the like, and I felt a disposition to follow their wicked example. But all at once something checked my little arm, and a voice within me said, clear and loud, ‘It is wrong.’ I held my uplifted stick in wonder at the new emotion, the consciousness of an involuntary but inward check upon my actions, till the tortoise and the rhodora both vanished from my sight. I hastened home, and told the tale to my mother, and asked what it was that told me ‘it was wrong.’ She wiped a tear from her eye, and taking me in her arms said: ‘Some men call it conscience, but I prefer to call it the voice of God in the soul of man. If you listen and obey it, it will speak clearer and clearer, and always guide you right; but if you turn a deaf ear and disobey, then it will fade out little by little, and leave you in the dark and without a guide. Your life depends on heeding that little voice.’” This is the truth, let me say again, of Balaam’s history; and having so shown it to you, or tried to make you see it, I might almost leave it to your reflection without a word. But as I want you to realise what the human conscience is, and how responsible you all are for your mode of treating it, there are just two or three remarks which I will make. 1. Firstly, there are some people who make a boast, as it were, of having what I may call a loose or easy conscience. They think it a sign of intellectual light to be free from conscientious scruples. They say, “Oh, yes, no doubt there was a time when it was thought wrong to touch or to read newspapers and secular books on Sundays, or to go to a theatre, or to participate in dancing or card-playing or any such thing; but these were Puritan days, and we have outlived them, we have learned to laugh at them, we do nowadays pretty much as we like.” This is the sort of language which is often heard in the world. Now what I say to you about it shall be simple common sense. I agree to some extent with the people who so

speak. It is a mistake, I think, to multiply the number of sins. There are so many things which are wrong in the world, and it is so hard for most of us to keep from doing them, that I should say we make a mistake if we involuntarily add to the number of things which we may not do. Only forgive my saying that, if one must make a mistake, then it is better to err on the side of abstaining from good than on the side of running heedlessly into wrong. It is better to have a weak conscience than a wicked one. Do not you think that for one person who violates the Sunday from a religious motive, there are twenty who violate it because they do not care for religion at all? And is it not likely—ah! how likely—that, if we are not careful to cherish the means of grace and of religious practice, if we do not go to church and to the Holy Communion, we shall gradually sink into a worldly way of looking at things, and our religion will die away altogether?

2. Again, let me impress upon you that your conscience is plastic; you are always forming it, always making it better or worse. If you listen to it when it speaks, it speaks more plainly; if you neglect it, it will simply cease to speak. Ought it not to be your prayer, your daily effort, to see good and evil as God sees them? For, believe me, I am telling you what I know, when you grow up and go out into the world, you will hear people saying of even the vilest sins, "What does it matter? I do not see the wrong of it." There is a blindness of the soul as well as of the body; and although the blinded soul cannot behold the Sun of Righteousness, the Sun is shining in the heaven all the same.

3. Lastly, follow your conscience, and it shall lead you to God. Believe me, the only way to get more spiritual light is to live according to the light you have. It may be only a ray that breaks athwart the darkness; make the most of it, and some day you shall have more. There may be hereafter only one duty which is clear to you, only one friend or kinsman whom you can help, only one boy whom you can keep from evil, only one piece of work which you alone can do. Well, do that. Try to accomplish that one object. Try to save just that one human soul. Gradually, it may be after many a day, the clouds will break. You will know more of God's will. He will seem nearer to you. His voice will sound more clearly in your soul. You shall enter into that Divine peace which the world may neither give nor take away.

(J. E. C. Welldon, M.A.) *Balaam, an instance of moral perversion:*—How came it that Balaam acted so inconsistently with his knowledge and convictions, and succeeded for the time, as we may say, in juggling with his conscience? The answer is not hard to find. He loved money. His heart was set on gold. He had allowed the passion of covetousness to become the ruling principle of his nature. I have somewhere read of one who, having found a young leopard, petted it, and trained it to be his daily companion in his chamber. It grew up to maturity, but still it was kept beside him, and men wondered at his foolishness in permitting it to go unchained. But he would not be advised. One day, however, as it licked his hand with its rough tongue, it ruffled the skin, and tasted his blood; and then all the savage nature of the brute came out, and there was a fearful struggle between them, from which he escaped only by destroying it. So it was, in some respects, in this case. Balaam had nurtured his covetousness into strength; and now, at the offer of Balak's rewards, its full force came out; but, instead of fighting with it and slaying it, he yielded to it and was destroyed. What a terrible passion is this of covetousness! and how dangerous it is, especially to those who wish to preserve a fair appearance! For in men's estimation it is, at least in its beginnings, a respectable thing. Nor is its respectability its only danger, for in the minds of many it is associated only with large sums of money; whereas in reality it may be as strong in the heart of him whose dealings are carried on in cents as in that of one whose transactions are concerned with hundreds of thousands of dollars. No one of us, whether rich or poor, whether minister or layman, has a right to say that there is no fear of him in this matter; for if the love of money takes possession of the heart, it will blind the eyes, and harden the conscience, and become a root of evil, so that we shall "fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts that war against the soul." But what is true of covetousness is true also of every evil principle, so that we may generalise the lesson here, and say that if the heart be fixed on any object as its God, other than the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we may expect in the end, whatever may be our knowledge, and whatever our scruples in other respects, that we shall act against our convictions, and make shipwreck not only of the faith, but also of ourselves, "without possibility of salvage." (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *Balaam the man of double mind:*—He was one of those unstable men whom the apostle calls double-

minded—an ambidexter in religion, like Redwald, king of the East Saxons, the first who was baptized, who, as Camden relates, had, in the same church, one chapel for the Christian religion, and another for sacrificing to devils. A loaf of the same leaven was our resolute Rufus, who painted God on one side of his shield and the devil on the other, with the desperate inscription in Latin—"I am ready for either." (*C. Ness.*)

Balaam's protest :—A brave speech, certainly! Yes, no doubt it was true that Balaam felt that even for a house full of silver and gold he could not go beyond the word of the Lord. But, in the first place, why protest so much concerning silver and gold? Balak's message had not mentioned silver and gold—it spoke specially of honour. Surely it must have been because the mind of Balaam was so much preoccupied with thoughts of silver and gold that he thus spake; answering himself rather than others. And then, why does Balaam say, "I cannot" go beyond the word of the Lord? Why does he not roundly say, "I will not go beyond the word of the Lord"? As it is he only speaks of inability; he does not mention such a thing as personal disinclination. These flaws we notice in his words. But still, upon the whole, his speech was brave, just, perhaps, as one may say, one whit too bold. For if there be one thing that we have need to stand in doubt of, in moments of temptation, it is high sounding phrases of determination. For, as a rule, we may be sure the courage of the heart is in an inverse proportion to the valour of the lip. Balaam was conscious of an inward faltering in reference to that which lay before him, and he sought to veil the weakness of his purpose by the vigour of his protestations. (*W. Roberts.*)

Dallying with temptation :—Balaam is very sure that he shall confine himself to the word of the Lord, but he, himself, out of his own heart, has begun to entertain the purpose of getting upon the scene of these glittering temptations. He proposes to remain a true man, but he enjoys the company of these honourable princes. He will remain a true man, but he would like to be near a king who can send such presents. He will remain a true man, but, once in Moab, his wit will stand him in hand better than in these dull regions where he dwells. It is the old, old story of humanity—dallying with temptation in the field of the imagination, bribing conscience with fair promises, yet all the while moving up to the forbidden thing. It is a history not seldom repeated. Oh, no! I shall never become a miser, but I propose to be exceedingly prudent. I shall never throw away my reputation, my character, but I will feed eye and ear and imagination with pictures of forbidden pleasure. I shall never become a drunkard, but I will drink in moderation. I shall never permit myself to be called a selfish man, but I will take good care of myself in this rough world. I shall never become dishonest, but I will keep a keen eye for good chances. Thus it is that men are passing to ruin over a path paved with double purposes. Balaam now gets a different answer. The first time he is honest and open, and is told to remain; the next time he takes into the interview his own desires, which are against his convictions, and a half-formed purpose, and he comes out of it with the answer he wants; desire has taken the lead of conscience. He starts on his ill-fated journey, meets with strange, confounding experiences—reflections of the moral confusion into which he has fallen—experiences, however, that serve to steady and buttress him on his professional side, but are not able to prevent his fall as a man. (*T. T. Munger.*)

On tampering with conscience :—Is this conduct of Balaam's strange or unusual? Have we none of us done exactly as Balaam did? I protest that men are doing precisely as Balaam did every day. Yes, and every day are meeting with the selfsame punishment, and braving the selfsame anger. Temptation to self-aggrandisement of various kinds comes before us, there is a prospect of a brilliant success, there is the hope of some tempting reward; the only condition is a course of action about the lawfulness of which we are in doubt. Then comes the trial—we ponder: on one side is the bait glittering—we long for so great a prize. But God comes to us—speaks to us in our consciences—speaks to us by His Word—speaks to us by His Spirit, saying, Forbear! there is sin in the doing of that which must be done ere the end you long for can be attained. And at first we acquiesce. Clearly it has been shown to us, that though ease and pleasure be sweet, duty is stern and may not be gainsaid; that though success be exquisite delight, unfairness is always vile and bad; that though fame and position be longed for never so eagerly, yet to depart from truth or honesty is to depart from God. But by and by the temptation is looked at again and again—the thing we long for is always before us, the thing we fear is far; and we begin to ask whether our first impression was really quite so unmistakably right as we believed it. We look to see if for some little swerving from the rigorous path of virtue some excuse may not be found.

And we question whether the end may not be attained without quite using all the means. We seek to know if our consciences cannot allow us to grasp the thing we wish, and for its sake bear us blameless for once in doing the thing we shrink from; and, in short, little by little, we give ourselves to be deceived as Balaam did. We ask for guidance, perchance with a divided heart; we pray God to teach us how to act, when we have already more than half decided. We pretend to leave ourselves in His hands, and yet we are only pretending; and then if He speaks to us at all, it is a voice which speaks to a conscience that has become confused, and a judgment that has suffered itself only too willingly to be disjointed; and though the voice seems to be, and in some sense is, the voice of God, yet it is, indeed, only a lie. (*A. Jessopp, M.A.*)

Withstanding temptation:—That was a bright suggestion of a little boy who made the following answer to the question of a passer-by. Seeing the little fellow patting his father's horse, that was standing in front of his house, the man asked, "Can your horse go fast, my boy?" "No, not very," he replied, "but he can stand fast." That is a virtue not to be despised in a horse; a faithful animal that can be trusted to remain in his tracks without pulling down the hitching post or breaking his halter is to be coveted. Can it be said of you, boys, that you "can stand fast"? Are you firm when tempted to do wrong? Are you easily led astray? Put yourself on the right side, and when urged to step aside from it remember always to stand fast. (*Juvenile Templar.*)

Gold an ignoble motive for service:—The noblest deeds which have been done on earth have not been done for gold. It was not for the sake of gold that our Lord came down and died, and the apostles went out to preach the good news in all lands. The Spartans looked for no reward in money when they fought and died at Thermopylæ; and Socrates the wise asked no pay from his countrymen, but lived poor and barefoot all his days, only caring to make men good. And there are heroes in our days also, who do noble deeds, but not for gold. Our discoverers did not go to make themselves rich when they sailed out one after another into the dreary frozen seas; nor did the ladies who went out to drudge in the hospitals of the East, making themselves poor, that they might be rich in noble works; and young men, too, did they say to themselves, "How much money shall I earn?" when they went to the war, leaving wealth and comfort, and a pleasant home, to face hunger and thirst, and wounds and death, that they might fight for their country and their Queen? No, children, there is a better thing on earth than wealth, a better thing than life itself, and that is, to have done something before you die, for which good men may honour you, and God your Father smile upon your work. (*C. Kingsley.*)

"No" without any "Yes" in it:—Many a promising youth has been ruined because he did not know how to say "No." There are many people who say "No," but so faintly that there seems a "Yes" in it, so that it only invites further persuasion. Many a man, tempted by appetite within, and by companions without, says "No" feebly and faintly. His "No" has a "Yes" in it. A lad was coming along the street one day with a young man who lived near him who was somewhat excited by strong drink, and after walking along awhile with his companion he drew a bottle from his pocket, and said, "Have some?" "Well, hand it over," replied the lad. The bottle was passed to him, and raising it aloft he hurled it with a crash against the stone wall, and turning to his astonished companion, he said, "Don't you ever put a bottle to my lips again." The young man was inclined to be irritated, but he had sense enough to retain his anger. The lad's "No" had not any "Yes" in it. There are scores of young men who need the decision which this lad had. (*S. S. Chronicle.*)

A rotting conscience:—I think no man could have his arm rot and drop away, from wrist to shoulder, and not know it; but you shall find numberless men whose consciences have rotted, from circumference to core, and they know nothing about it. They are less concerned about themselves than when the corruption first began. This silence of the hollowing out of a man—this noiseless process of preparing him for destruction, is an element of very great fearfulness. It fills me with grief and sadness, as I look on men, to know that as the snow falls, flake by flake, and no sound tells of its accumulation—that as the dust sifts in, and no noise warns of its choking rise, so silently, so surely, man is heaping to himself wrath against the day of wrath, and does not know it. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Something wrong with conscience:—A steamboat going at full speed approached a bridge. The pilot saw that the draw was not open, and rang his bell to have the engines reversed. There was ample time to bring the vessel to a stand, if the signal had been obeyed. But, in spite of it, the boat went crashing through the bridge, causing great damage and much peril, though, as it happened, no actual loss of life.

It was found afterwards that the bell-wire was broken, so that the bell did not ring in the engineer's room. Something like this often happens to that safeguard of our soul which we call conscience. It gets disordered in one way or another and doesn't work. A danger is perceived. We see plainly the course we ought to take. Conscience warns us that we are on the wrong road. Why don't we stop, and turn into the way we know is safe? Because conscience has lost its power. In the engine-room of our ship of life, where Will presides, the voice of conscience is unheard, or, if heard at all, is unheeded. Instead of being a recognised and regarded imperative, as it ought to be, it has become impotent. The instinct that tells us to do what is right and to shun what is wrong is one of the highest faculties of the human soul. Like all our powers, both of mind and body, it may be blunted and withered and deadened until it is practically lost. Youth is the time to watch against and avert this awful disaster. We cannot too carefully cherish the first and quick sensitiveness which gives to conscience its proper mastery, and causes it to be obeyed as God's own voice speaking in the heart of man. (*Christian Age.*)

Parallels to the case of Balaam:—Parallels to the case of Balaam are not difficult to find. Cardinal Wolsey, dispensing ecclesiastical ban and blessing, at the mandate of Henry the Eighth; Richelieu and Mazarin, each betraying his churchly trust for the sake of political power—are well-known instances. Contrast with these Ambrose's stern arraignment of Theodosius, an account of which will be found in any good ecclesiastical history. The schoolboy who sneers at religion, hoping to gain thereby the favour of his companions, is unconsciously following in the footsteps of Balaam. The demons gave good testimony to Christ (Luke viii. 28, 29) and to His apostles (Acts xix. 15), but that did not render them any the less demons. So Balaam, himself a wicked man, prophesied of the coming Messiah. Compare the case of Caiaphas the high priest (John xi. 50, 51). Recall Christ's description of the judgment, where many who have prophesied the truth in His name will be told that they are none of His (Matt. vii. 22, 23). Balaam fell, though his eyes were open. (*American S. S. Times.*)

God's anger was kindled because he went.—*God permits Balaam to go, and yet is angry*:—"Go," said the Voice; "but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak." Was this merely the echo of the Divine word in a hollow, bewildered conscience? That is not a full explanation of the fact, though it is one which we must not disregard. Balaam did go, and was intended to go. He would not have learned the lesson which he was to learn if he had not gone. And yet his going was a wilful act. It was the struggle of one determined to have his own way, claiming the privilege of a man, while he was reducing himself into the condition of an animal, one that must be held in with bit and bridle, because he will not be guided and governed as a spiritual creature. You are puzzled at the language of Scripture about God's permitting Balaam to go, and then being displeased at him for going. You may well be puzzled. For what are so utterly bewildering as the mazes and contradictions of a human will, confessing a Master, struggling to disobey Him? But would you rather that the Bible left this fact unnoticed? Would you rather that it described human actions and events without reference to it? Is that the proof which you demand that it was written by God and for men? You will not have that sign if you ask for it ever so much. Not here alone, but everywhere, you will be met with these contradictions; man striving with God, God dealing with him as a voluntary creature, such as He had made him to be, not crushing his will by an act of omnipotence, but teaching it to feel its own impotency and madness. (*F. D. Maurice, M.A.*)

The Divine permission of self-will:—I do not see how any thoughtful man can consider this story without discovering why God allows men to enter on ways which are not good, and which are therefore full of peril, and why He nevertheless "withstands" them when they walk in them. He allows them to enter on such ways that they may come to know themselves as they are, in their weakness as well as in their strength, that they may see clearly what is evil in their nature as well as what is good; and He withstands them in order that they may become aware of the perils to which they are unconsciously exposing themselves, may feel their need of His guidance and help, and may suffer Him to save them from their sins, and out of weakness make them strong. (*S. Cox, D.D.*)

The cause of God's anger with Balaam:—God is not angry without cause; and the one cause which makes Him angry with men is some unrighteousness in them, or some inward leaning toward unrighteousness. And what could the unrighteous leaning of Balaam be but that, in the conflict between his own interests and desires and the will of God, he was permitting his interests and

desires to prevail over his sense of duty, suffering the baser elements of his nature to override the promptings of that in him which was highest and best, giving way, in short, to the temptation which Balak had held out before him, and scheming how he might please man without altogether breaking with God. So absorbed is he in his schemes, so preoccupied, that this man, ordinarily so alert, so quick to discern omens, so sensitive to spiritual intimations, so proud of his open eye, actually does not see the angel who stands full in his path, with his sword drawn in his hand. This inward preoccupation and deterioration was "the madness" which the dumb ass forbade and rebuked. And how severe and humiliating, yet how merciful, the rebuke! How humiliating that he who prided himself on being "the man whose eyes are open, who heareth the words of God and seeth the vision of the Almighty," should find himself outdone by the very beast he rode, blind to what even his ass could see; so insensate, so "transported from himself" as that he had sought to slay the very creature who had saved him! And yet what a wonder of mercy and grace was it that even while, as the angel told him, his way was rash, foolhardy, full of hidden perils which he ought never to have affronted, God had not forgotten or forsaken him, but had miraculously interposed to warn him that the course he was meditating could only lead him to destruction, to arrest him in his downward path, to quicken his attention, to open his eyes to the spiritual facts and omens of which he had lost ken, and to call him back to the allegiance he so loudly professed! (*Ibid.*)

The opposition of God's angel:—Is not this opposition of the angel to Balaam a picture and a symbol of the way in which God is evermore withstanding evil courses? When Jacob was at Peniel, we read, "there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day" (Gen. xxxii. 24). That man, also, was the angel of the Lord (Hosea xii. 4), come forth to withstand Jacob in his crooked ways, until Jacob should surrender them, and win a blessing from his adversary. And so God was, by His angel, opposing Balaam's evil way, until he should abandon it, and thus be blessed of God (chap. xxii. 32). And see, in this symbolic action of the angel of the Lord, how the resistances of God to evil thicken on us in our sinful paths. At first the ass swerves only from the beaten track; then she injures Balaam's foot; then she falls down under him. And is not this a picture, to the very life, of things that happen every day to evil-doers? They find instruments and agencies, on which they have implicitly relied, betraying them or failing them. They find themselves injured or maimed in their endeavours to press forward in their mad career. And suddenly life perfectly breaks down with them, and leaves them prostrate on the earth. And is not Balaam's blindness to the angel of the Lord a picture of the blindness to the course of Providence which evil-doers not unfrequently display? Things which one would think must cause reflection, come and go without exciting even notice. Bent on their own self-willed career, they are completely blind to all besides, till presently disaster overtakes them, and they narrowly escape destruction. And does not the insensate rage of Balaam fitly typify the wrath and anger that we feel at all the opposition we encounter in an evil way? What savage thoughts breed in our hearts, and cruel words breathe from our lips, in moments such as these! We are ready to destroy the very things that serve us; aye, the very things that save us! Balaam would have slain his ass, though she had served him many years, and though she now preserved his life by her sagacity. Brethren, let us rather be thankful for the oppositions of the angel of the Lord, when we are in an evil way; for these opposing providences are designed for our salvation and deliverance. (*W. Roberts.*)

God's opposition to Balaam:—We have here an account of the opposition God gave to Balaam in his journey towards Moab; probably the princes were gone before, or gone some other way, and Balaam had appointed where he would meet them, or where they would stay for him, for we read nothing of them in this encounter; only that Balaam, like a person of some quality, was attended with his two men;—honour enough, one would think, for such a man, he needed not be beholden to Balak for promotion. 1. Here is God's displeasure against Balaam for undertaking this journey, God's "anger was kindled because he went" (ver. 22). Note—(1) The sin of sinners is not to be thought the less provoking to God for His permitting it. We must not think that because God doth not by His providence restrain men from sin, therefore He approves of it; or that it is therefore not hateful to Him; He suffers sin, and yet is angry at it. (2) Nothing is more displeasing to God than malicious designs against His people; he that touches them touches the apple of His eye. 2. The way God took to let Balaam know His displeasure against him. An angel stood in the way for an adversary. Now God fulfilled His promise to Israel, "I

will be an enemy to thine enemies" (Exod. xxiii. 22). The holy angels are adversaries to sin, and perhaps are employed more than we are aware of in preventing it, particularly in opposing those that have any ill designs against God's Church and people, for whom Michael, our prince, stands up (Dan. xii. 1, x. 21). What a comfort is this to all that wish well to the Israel of God, that He never suffers wicked men to form any attempt against them, but He sends His holy angels forth to break the attempts, and secure His little ones! This angel was an adversary to Balaam, because Balaam counted him his adversary; otherwise those are really our best friends, and we are so to reckon them that stop our progress in a sinful way. The angel stood with his sword drawn (ver. 23), a flaming sword, like that in the hands of the cherub (Gen. iii. 24), turning every way. Note, the holy angels are at war with those with whom God is angry, for they are the ministers of His justice. Balaam has notice given him of God's displeasure—3. By the ass, and that did not startle him. "The ass saw the angel" (ver. 23). How vainly did Balaam boast that he was a man whose eyes were open, and that he saw "the vision of the Almighty" (chap. xxiv. 3, 4), when the ass he rode on saw more than he did, his eyes being blinded with covetousness and ambition, and dazzled with the rewards of divination! Note, many have God against them, and His holy angels, but are not aware of it. 4. Balaam at length had notice of God's displeasure by the angel, and that did startle him. When God opened his eyes he "saw the angel" (ver. 31), and then he himself "fell flat upon his face," in reverence of that glorious messenger, and in fear of the sword he saw in his hand. God has many ways of breaking and bringing down the hard and unhumiliated heart. (1) The angel reproved him for his outrageousness: "Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass?" (vers. 32, 33). Whether we consider it or no, it is certain God will call us to account for the abuses done to His creatures. Note, when our eyes are opened we shall see what danger we are in, in a sinful way; and how much it was for our advantage to be crossed in it, and what fools we were to quarrel with our crosses which helped to save our lives. (2) Balaam then seemed to relent, "I have sinned" (ver. 34); sinned in undertaking this journey, sinned in pushing on so violently; but he excuses it with this, that he saw not the angel, but now he did see him he was willing to go back again. That which was displeasing to God was not so much his going, as his going with a malicious design against Israel, and a secret hope, that notwithstanding the proviso with which his permission was clogged, he might prevail to curse them, and so gratify Balak, and get preferment under him. Now this wickedness of his heart it doth not appear that he is sensible of, or willing to own; but if he finds he cannot go forward, he will be content (since there is no remedy) to go back. Here is no sign that his heart is turned, but if his hands be tied he cannot help it. Thus many leave their sins, only because their sins have left them. There seems to be a reformation of the life, but what will that avail if there be no renovation of the heart? 5. The angel, however, continued his permission, "Go with the men" (ver. 35). Go, if thou hast a mind to be made a fool of, and to be made ashamed before Balak, and all the princes of Moab. "Go, but the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak," whether thou wilt or no. For this seems not to be a precept, but a prediction of the event, that he should not only not be able to curse Israel, but he should be forced to bless them; which would be more for the glory of God, and his own confusion, than if he had turned back. Thus God gave him fair warning, but he would not take it; he went with the princes of Balak. For the iniquity of Balaam's covetousness God was "wroth and smote him," but he "went on frowardly" (Isa. lvii. 17). (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*)

Restraints from sin:—I. THE FORMS OF RESTRAINT FROM SIN. 1. They appear in external appliances. The revealed Word of God stands in the way as a hindrance to what is wrong, and a guide to good-will to man and obedience to the Lord, if only fairly consulted. 2. In addresses to the understanding. The remembrance of some words of God, or the words of some man, overheard or directly spoken to you, may be the means of placing in light some dark feature of thought, or some evil action. 3. In stirrings of conscience. These are graduated from an almost insuperable prohibition to the scarcely perceptible whisper of doubt. 4. In excitements of the emotions. Each pang of remorse, and each thrill of fear, utter, in different forms, "Keep back from sin." II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF RESTRAINTS FROM SIN. 1. They are frequent. 2. They are progressive. If being turned aside will not induce a retreat, there will be a crushing of the foot. 3. They are near, though oft unnoticed. (*D. G. Watt, M.A.*) *God withstanding sinners:*—No longer are there miracles performed to intimate to the ungodly man that it shall

not fare well with him, and that he shall but eat the fruit of what he sowed. But heaven and earth, the dead and those who live, nature and grace, appear as if they now and then combined in earnest supplication to exclaim, "Stop, sinner, stop!" Who has not some time, like Balaam, come face to face with God, upon the path of sin, when He made known His terrors and His threatenings? And what man dares affirm that there has been too little effort made to lead him from the broad way to the narrow path of life? Nay, more; Balaam's brief experience is, in a certain sense, as nothing when compared with that long labour of love which God in Christ has most unweariedly bestowed upon us, that we might be saved. Nay, God has no delight in any sinner's death, but spares when He could smite; nor does He ever suffer us to hold on in the way to death, without affording us a last, loud warning, that not seldom comes on us as if it were an angel's sword piercing our very bones. Blessed, thrice blessed he who, with a more unfeigned humility than that of Balaam, can acknowledge, "I have sinned," and who does not grow hard in sin, but lets himself be led. Soon shall he learn, with deep astonishment, that God's good angels round encircle him in all his ways; and that far more is to be gained in serving Him than the disgraceful pittance offered by the Balak-hand of a vain world. But if, like Balaam, you still kick against the pricks, the time is drawing nigh when you, like him, shall be cast from the presence of the God of everlasting righteousness, and given over to that death which you so obstinately choose before the life now offered you. (*J. J. Van Oosterzee, D.D.*) *Balaam's vision*:—1. In looking at this passage we must make every allowance for the difference between those times and ours. I do not know any valid reason why God in the accomplishment of His infinitely wise designs might not employ the means here described, and miraculously impart to the ass the organs of articulation, and a knowledge of their use. 2. After the most close and candid attention, however, which I have been able to give to the subject, I am led to the conclusion that the occurrence here related was a dream, or vision, which took place on the night previous to his journey. He knew that he was doing wrong; for, although he had permission to go, yet it was not permitted him to do so with the wicked design which he cherished in his heart—that of cursing the people. On this account his guilty conscience tormented him, and, in his sleep, vividly presented to his mind the scene here recorded. At the end of ver. 35 (after the scene is finished) the words, "So Balaam went with the princes of Balak," seem to refer to his setting out on his journey. 3. There is one objection which may be urged to this view. St. Peter says, "The dumb ass," &c. To this it may be replied, that the occurrence, though happening only in a dream, appeared as real to the mind of the prophet as though it had actually taken place, and was designed to have all the force and effect of a real transaction. 4. In favour of the hypothesis the reasons are, I think, numerous and satisfactory. (1) In the prophecies many accounts of visions are given which are not formally introduced as such (*Isa. vi.*). (2) Balaam expressed no surprise at being addressed by the animal. In dreaming we feel no surprise at the most astonishing occurrences. (3) The narrative of this transaction appears to intimate that the prophet was nearly alone: "two servants were with him." In his real journey, however, he was accompanied by the princes of Moab, who had, no doubt, a great number of attendants. (4) He had received permission to go, whereas, in this account, the angel appears angry with him for going in compliance with that permission. Strong presumptive proof that the workings of a guilty conscience wrought on his mind during sleep, and produced a vivid dream or vision. (5) In chap. xxiii. it is repeatedly said, "He hath said which heard the words of God, which saw the visions of the Almighty; falling into a trance, but having his eyes open." May not this refer to the "vision," or "trance," or dream, of which we have been speaking? (*J. P. Smith, LL.D.*) *Obstructive providences*:

—I. THE LESSONS IT TAUGHT BALAAM. 1. It convinced him of spiritual blindness. 2. It taught absolute submission to God. II. LESSONS TO US. 1. We often go on wrong errands, or on right errands in a wrong spirit. 2. God checks us in His providence and in love to our souls. Illness; raising up of insuperable difficulties; falling off of friends; superior success to rivals, &c. 3. We are apt to fret and be angry at the instruments of our disappointment. We cast our spite and blame on second causes. 4. We should seek spiritual enlightenment to see that it is God's doing. Be not angry and resentful, but give yourselves to prayer; else, like Balaam, you will not see it is God who opposes you (*ver. 34*). 5. We can only be permitted to go forward when we are brought to a state of perfect subjection to God. Two things are here included—a perfect purity of motive and freedom from worldly

self-seeking, and an entire acquiescence in whatever God appoints, desires, or does. (*T. G. Horton.*) *Balaam stopped by an angel*:—1. It lies quite within our experience that we do get our own way, and yet have a sense of burning and judgment, of opposition and anger all the time. Men forget that there is a time when they need not ask the Lord any questions. Never trouble the Lord to know whether you cannot do just a little wrong; He is not to be called upon in relation to business of that kind. He does not pray who palters with moral distinctions, who wants to make compromises, who is anxious to find some little crevice or opening through which he can pass into the land of his own desire. 2. Men are stopped in certain courses without being able to tell the reason why. That also is matter of experience. The wind seems to be a wall before us; the road looks quite open, and yet we can make no progress in it. The business stands still; we have risen at the same hour in the morning, carried out the usual arrangements, been apparently on the alert all the time, and yet not one inch farther are we permitted to go. Suppose we have no God, no altar, no Church limitations, no ghostly ministry exerting itself upon our life and frightening us with superstition and spectre—we are healthy reasoners, downright robust rationalists—men who can take things up and set them down, square-headed men—yet there is the fact, that even we, such able-bodied rationalists, such healthy souls that any society would insure us on the slightest inquiry—there we are, puzzled, mystified, perplexed, distracted. 3. It also lies within the region of experience that men are rebuked by dumb animals. That is odd, but it is true. The whole Scripture is charged with that statement, and so charged with it as to amount to a practical philosophy in daily life: “But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee.” “The stork in heaven knoweth her appointed times.” “The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib.” “Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise.” Dumb creatures are continually teaching us. They keep law with wondrous obedience. The poorest brutes are really very faithful to the rude legislation under which they live. In temperance, in acceptance of discipline, in docility, I know not any beast that is ever used by man that may not teach some men, very distinctly, helpful and useful lessons. 4. Then, again, it does lie within our cognition that men do blame second causes for want of success. Balaam blamed the ass. That is what we are always doing. There is nothing exceptional in this conduct of the soothsayer. We want to get on—it is the beast that will not go. Who ever thought that an angel was confronting him—that a distinct ghostly purpose was against him? 5. Does it not also lie within the range of our experience that men do want to get back sometimes but are driven forward? Did not Balaam want to return when he said, “If it displease Thee, I will get me back again”? We cannot. Life is not a little trick, measurable by such terms. A man cannot make a fool of himself, and instantly turn round as if nothing had happened; we cannot drive a nail into a tree and take it out without leaving a wound behind. Conduct is of greater consequence than we imagine. Humanity is a sublime mystery, as well as God; and there is no way backward, unless it be in consent with the Mind that constructed and that rules creation. 6. But there is a difficulty about the dumb ass rebuking the perverse prophet. So there is. I would be dismayed by it if I were not overwhelmed by greater miracles still. This has come to be but a small thing—a very momentary wonder—as compared with more astounding circumstances. A more wonderful thing than that an ass should speak is that a man should forget God. The miracles of a physical and historical kind may admit of postponement as to their consideration; but that men should have forgotten God, and insulted law, and done unrighteously—these are mysteries which must not be delayed in their explanation and settlement. 7. So we come again and again to the great practical inquiry—Being on the wrong road, how shall we get back? There is no answer in man. If Balaam could have retraced his steps, put up his ass in the stable and gone about his business as if nothing had occurred, it would have been but a paper universe. That he could not do so, that he was under the pressure of mightier forces, indicates that the universe is itself a tragedy, and that the explanation of every character, every incident, and every flush of colour, must be left for another time, when the light is stronger and the duration is assured. Meanwhile, we can pray, we can look up, we can say, each for himself, “I have sinned.” (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Balaam’s ass*:—I. THE HISTORIC CHARACTER OF THE MIRACLE HERE RECORDED. II. THE MIRACLE ITSELF. III. THE OBJECT OF THE MIRACLE. 1. It was calculated to humble him in relation to a gift of God upon which he probably prided himself. It is likely he

was an eloquent man. He would now see that God could endow a brute with the gift of speech. 2. He would also see that an ass could discern a messenger from heaven, where he, blinded by his desire for gain, could see nothing but empty space. 3. He might also have learned that all speech was under Divine control, and that he would be able to utter only such words as God would permit. (*W. Jones.*)

Obstacles to vision.—A revelation of the truth is not enough. There must be an inner sympathy with the truth. Light avails not where there are no eyes to see. Take a blind man into a tunnel, and you have a symbol of the natural man without a Divine revelation. There are two obstacles to vision; first, the darkness around him, and then his own blindness. Lead him forth under the open firmament of revealed truth. Still he does not see. You have done something towards his enlightenment, you have given him knowledge, doctrine, the form of truth. But that is not enough. He lacks spiritual understanding. The scales must fall from his eyes. The Divine Spirit alone can accomplish this. (*J. Halsey.*)

The way of the perverse.—For the man who neglects salvation there is no rescue. Everything will plead against him. The waters will say, "We told him of the living stream where he might wash all his sins away, but he would not come." The rocks will say, "We told him of a shelter and defence to which he might run." The sun will say, "We told him of the Dayspring from on high, but he shut his eyes." The Bible will say, "I called him by a thousand invitations, and warned him with a thousand alarms." The throne of judgment will say, "I have but two sentences—that to the friends of God, and that to His rejecters." "Escape he must not," Jesus will say. "I called on him for many years, but he turned his back on My tears and blood." Then God will speak; and with a voice that shall ring through the heights and depths and lengths of His universe, say, "Escape he shall not." May the Lord God avert such a catastrophe! (*T. De Witt Talmage.*)

Balaam rebuked, but not checked.—Balaam is doing what he knows he ought not to do; there is a great wrong in his heart sending up its protests to the brain. The man is at cross purposes, and vents his unrest and ill-feeling upon outward objects. How often it happens! One in ill-humour often curses the tools he is using—the dulness of a saw, the waywardness of a shuttle, the knife that wounds his hand; he beats his horse or dog; he scolds his children. Here we come nigh the very heart of the story. When, in some fit of ill-temper brought on by our own wrongdoing, we have beaten an animal, or spoken roughly to a child, and then have noticed the humble patience of the brute under our anger, or the meek undoesert of the child reflected from its upturned eyes, there comes over us a sense of shame and an inward confession that the wrong is not in the brute or in the child, but in us. The beast or the child speaks back to us; its very bearing and looks become audible voices of rebuke. When a great man like Balaam gets involved in wrong-doing, all nature is changed to him, and from all things come rebuking voices. When Macbeth returns from the murder of the king, a simple knocking at the gate appals him and deepens the colour of his blood-stained hands; one sense runs into and does the office of another. To a harassed and guilty conscience the light comes with a condemnation; every true and orderly thing meets it with reproof—angels of God that confront it, but do not turn it from its fatal course. Balaam would have turned back, but he is told to go on. This is only another stage of the moral confusion into which he has fallen. He would go back, but the spirit of sophistry again begins to work, and he goes forward, but he will speak only the true word—evil drawing him on, while he excuses it with the plea of right intentions—a daily history on every side! Why did Balaam not go back? He could not. When a man does wrong in a simple and impulsive way under the direct force of temptation, he can retrace his steps; but when he has found what seems to him a safe path to a coveted end, he seldom gives over. Many men with scrupulous consciences do not regret being yoked with partners who are less particular; and many men do, as a corporation, what not one of them would do as an individual. Balaam could not avail himself of these modern methods, and so made a partnership and corporation of his own divided nature; reaping speedily in himself the bitter consequences of such action that overtake the modern man slowly but no less surely. (*T. T. Munger.*)

The talking ass, and what it taught Balaam.—The real difficulty of the incident to those who feel a special difficulty in it consists, I suppose, in the alleged fact that the ass spoke, spoke in apparently human words and with a human voice. And this difficulty has, to say the least of it, been very neatly turned by many of our ablest critics and commentators, some of whom have as little love for miracles as the veriest sceptic. They say, Balaam, the soothsayer

and diviner, was trained to observe and interpret the motions and cries of beasts and birds, and especially anything that was exceptional in them; to draw auguries and portents from them, to see in them the workings of a Divine power, to infer from them indications of the Divine will. Here was a portent indeed, and he must interpret it. And to him it seemed that the ass was striving and remonstrating with him; that, conscious of a presence of which he himself was unaware, it was seeking to save him from a doom which he was heedlessly provoking. And so, with the dramatic instinct of an Oriental poet, either Balaam himself or the original writer of the chronicle translated these subjective impressions into external facts, and made the ass "speak" the meaning which he read in its motions and groans. For myself, indeed, I care very little what interpretation may be placed on this singular passage in Balaam's story, and would as soon believe that the mouth of the dumb ass was really opened to utter articulate human words as that Balaam's sensitive and practised ear heard these words into his groans and cries. Put what construction on the talking ass you will; call it fact, call it fable, or say that Balaam read an ominous rebuke into the natural cries of the beast on which he rode—whatever the construction you put upon it, you will be little the wiser for it, little the better, unless you listen to the appeal, to the rebuke, which Balaam heard from the mouth of the ass or put into it. That lesson may be, and is, a very simple one; but its very simplicity at once makes it the more valuable, and renders it the more probable that, much as we need to learn it, we may have overlooked it. What, then, was this lesson or rebuke? The ass said, or Balaam took her to say, "Wherefore smite me? Have I not served you faithfully ever since I was thine? Am I wont to rebel against you?" How could Balaam fail to look for an ethical meaning in this appeal, or fail either to find it, or to find how heavy a rebuke it carried for himself? He too had a Master, a Master in heaven, and was loud and frequent in his protestations of loyalty to Him. Yet could he look up to heaven and say to his Master, "Why hast Thou checked and rebuked me? Have not I served Thee faithfully ever since I was Thine unto this day? Am I wont to disobey Thy word?" Why, at that very moment he was untrue, disloyal, to his Master; he was plotting how he might speak other words than those which God had put into his mouth, and serve his own will rather than the Divine will! Might he not, then, well hear in the rebuke of the ass some such appeal as this: "Have you been as true to your Master as I to mine? Have you been as mindful of the heavenly vision as I of the heavenly apparition which I have seen? Has your service been as faithful, as patient, as disinterested as mine?" The lesson is simple enough, I admit; but is it not also most necessary and valuable? He is convicted—1. Of having cruelly wronged the innocent creature who had saved him from the sword. 2. Of having failed at his strongest point and lost the "open eye" of which he was wont to boast; and—3. Of not being as true to his Master in heaven, despite his loud professions of loyalty and obedience, as she had been to her master on earth. If no rebuke could be more severe and humbling, none surely could have been more kind and merciful. For if men are not to be held back from evil by an angel, is it not well that they should be held back even by an ass? If the gentler strokes of correction fail, is it not well that they should be followed by severer and more effectual strokes? If appeals to our higher nature do not suffice to arrest us, is it not well that we should be arrested by appeals to our lower nature? (*S. Cox, D.D.*) *Balaam's ass, or cruelty rebuked*:—How many just and good men have been remarkable for their tenderness to animals! Tradition tells us of the partridge of St. John, the tame lion of St. Jerome; we find in St. Francis an enthusiastic love of birds; and to come to modern days, in the letters of Bishop Thirlwall, thought to be a man of giant intellect, we read that often he could not sleep at night, because he was haunted by some story of cruelty to animals which he had heard, whilst the writings of Sir Arthur Helps, the most charming essayist of our age, tells us that he would not live his life over again, if the chance was offered, for he had suffered so much from indignation and sympathy with the sufferings of animals. Often cruelty arises from thoughtlessness. Children do not reflect on what they are doing, and it is the duty of all persons to teach, in every way, humanity and kind feeling to the animals around us. A disposition which practises cruelty towards animals will not stop there, for it is only a training for the bad treatment of human beings. It was remarked of Domitian, the cruel Emperor of Rome, that he spent his leisure moments in killing flies. Who can doubt but that it was the horrible taste for wild beast fights that led to the still more horrible conflicts of gladiators in the Roman amphitheatres? And so, too, in Spain, the savage excitement of the

populace in the bull fights led even religious men to witness unmoved the *auto-da-fés* of the Inquisition. Ever should we recollect that these creatures belong to God, constructed by His wondrous skill, watched over by His gracious care, and not to be ill-treated or tormented without incurring His vengeance. A boy was once teasing a poor kitten. "Don't!" said his little sister, "it is God's kitten." Her remark fell upon the ear of her father, a careless drunkard, as he was turning out of the door, and like an arrow from a bow there struck into his conscience the thought, "If this little creature belongs to God, how much more a soul like mine!" And the arrow of conviction lodged in his heart, and gave him no rest till he entered on a better life, as belonging to God. Let us, then, strive to make all God's creatures around us as happy as we can, find in them loving friends and companions, and thank God for giving us the animals as our humble friends and loyal servants; ever remembering, as a forcible preacher has said, "There is no sin that will sink a soul so low in hell as cruelty to helpless creatures." (*J. W. Hardman, LL.D.*)

Sin perverse:—That Balaam answered the ass when he heard her speak, and rather stood not amazed at the strange work of God, note earnestly with yourself what a strong possession covetousness had taken of his heart, so holding of him captive that he was not able to observe this strange thing, but blind and besotted with hope of worldly honour and gain, feedeth still upon that, and admitteth no stop nor stay of this journey by his good will. Such is the power of any sin if it once rule in a man or woman, it bereaveth them of all judgment to see their estate, or the love of them that persuade them otherwise. How blockish was Pharaoh till he was overthrown! How senseless the Jews till Jerusalem and they tasted of extremity! Swearers and swaggerers, drunkards and whoremongers, liars and libellers, railers and slanderers, with all the rest, are as blind and blockish as Balaam here, doting upon their own course till they smart for it, or the Lord open their eyes to see Him against them as at last here He did Balaam's eyes to see the angel with drawn sword against him. When the ass saith, "Did I ever serve thee thus before?" it may admonish us not to be too rash with our neighbours and brethren, who have never been noted to be such offenders, but ever of good and virtuous behaviour. (*Bp. Babington.*)

I have sinned.—Balaam's "*I have sinned*":—Balaam was a man who had frequent and extraordinary communications with God. Balaam was undoubtedly a man of great light; and his gifts were rare and transcendent. If you ask, "Were they from God or from the Evil One?" I do not know. I should say both. If God endowed him, certainly Satan occupied him: if Satan taught him, as certainly God used him. The light and the darkness were in tremendous nearness and antagonism in that one breast. The restraining power was very large; the determination of will was stronger still. He had very soft seasons: but they passed like April gleams! His convictions were real and deep; but they proved quite barren. His aspirations were beautiful and holy: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" but his faith never grasped, and his life never followed, those high desires. He acknowledged fully the blessedness of the people of God: "God hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob": "Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee"; but he never tried to be one of those happy ones. Israel's future was clear and bright to him—in all its safety and its joy—but it was never more than a confession, which played before his fancy! He saw the Lord Jesus Himself—as in a vista—but it was a Jesus seen, but not known; admired, but never felt. See, then, the exact position of Balaam. On his lips, "*I have sinned*"; probably in his heart a condemning sense that he was wrong; a conviction that he had made a great mistake; but his passions high-wrought; a resolute will and purpose in direct antagonism to the known will of God; one sin, all the while, tightly grasped; and a worldly, covetous affection in the ascendant! This was Balaam, as he went out at Pethor that early morning, through the vineyards of the city. I need not follow him further. You remember how his gifts grew greater, and his prescience grew clearer, and his language grew lovelier, and his pretensions grew loftier—just in the same proportion as his determination grew sterner, and his desires more grovelling—till the sure end came at last, and he became carnal, his counsel was gross, his wisdom diabolical, and he laid, with his own hand, the scheme to his own destruction; and his unsanctified and debased talent was his own scourge, and his own ruin! Reduce the picture to the scale of ordinary life, and it is the life of many. A man of religious knowledge—very impulsive and feeling—a clever man, with strong inward conflict—conversant with God—with the language of piety on his lips—speaking, not without some reality, the words of true penitence, and yet, at the very same time, with a direct hostility to

God—harbouring a secret, evil appetite in his heart—and bent only upon selfishness! Draw near, and say whether you see yourself anywhere in the portrait? There is an acknowledgment of sin, under sorrow, which often clothes itself in very strong expressions, even to tears, and which is little else than a passion. It is not altogether an hypocrisy. At the moment it is sincere, very earnest. But it is an emotion—only an emotion. There is no real love to God in it, no true sense of sin, no relation to Christ. It does not go on to action. I have known a person—whose wonder and regret was that his penitence never seemed to deepen or increase; yet he said, and said often, and said truly, “I have sinned.” The reason was, he never put the “I have sinned” upon the right thing. He said it about his sins generally, or he said it about some particular sin; but, all the while, there was another sin behind, about which he did not say it. The sin he willingly forgot—he connived at it—he allowed it! All the rest he was willing to give up, but not that. And that was his sin. And that sin reserved and in the background, poisoned and deadened the repentance of all other sins! The “I have sinned” fell to the ground impotent—like a withered blossom. That was Balaam—and that may be you! Or is it thus? You have an object in life very dear. You know that the object is not after God’s will; but still you pursue it. You recur to it again and again—after voices—after providences—which have all told you that it is wrong. But you will have your darling object at any cost—even though it forfeit peace of mind, and though you lose God’s favour. This, again, is Balaam. Can you wonder if the “I have sinned” goes for nothing at all, and if you are left to your own rash, reckless way? There is many a man who says, in his own room, very often, and at church, “I have sinned”; but throughout the week, every day, and all the day, he is grasping in his business, he is anxious in his home, he is occupied in his thoughts about money. It is money, money everywhere. Money gives its tone and colour to his whole life. That is Balaam to the very letter. (*Jas. Vaughan, M.A.*)

Vers. 36–41. **Balaam went with Balak.**—*The meeting between Balak and Balaam*:—We have here the meeting between Balak and Balaam, confederate enemies to God’s Israel; but here they seem to differ in their expectations of the success. 1. Balak speaks of it with confidence, not doubting but to gain his point now Balaam was come. In expectation of this he went out to meet him, even to the utmost border of his country (ver. 36); partly to gratify his own impatient desire to see one he had such great expectations from, and partly to do honour to Balaam, and so to engage him with his utmost power to serve him. See what respect heathen princes paid to those that had but the name of prophets, and how welcome one was that came with his mouth full of curses. What a shame is it, then, that the ambassadors of Christ are so little respected by most, and that they are so coldly entertained who bring tidings of peace and blessing! Note, promotion to honour is a very tempting bait to many people; and it were well if we would be drawn into the service of God by the honour He sets before us. Why do we delay to come unto Him? Is not He able to promote us to honour? 2. Balaam speaks doubtfully of the issue, and bids Balak not depend too much upon him. “Have I now any power at all to say anything?” (ver. 38). I am come, but what the nearer am I? Gladly would I come to Israel; but I must not, I cannot, God will not suffer me. He seems to speak with vexation at the hook in his nose, and the bridle in his jaws; such as Sennacherib was tied up with (Isa. xxxvii. 29). 3. They address themselves with all speed to the business; Balaam is nobly entertained overnight, a sacrifice of thanksgiving is offered to the gods of Moab for the safe arrival of this welcome guest, and he is treated with a feast upon the sacrifice (ver. 40); and the next morning, that no time might be lost, Balak takes Balaam in his chariot to the high places of his kingdom, not only because their holiness (such as it was), he thought, might give some advantage to his divinations, but their height might give him a convenient prospect of the camp of Israel, which was to be the mark at which he must shoot his envenomed arrows. And now Balaam is really as solicitous to please Balak as ever he pretended to be to please God. See what need we have to pray every day, “Our Father in heaven, lead us not into temptation.” (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*)

CHAPTER XXIII.

VERS. 1-4. Balak and Balaam offered on every altar.—*The sacrifice of Balak and Balaam*:—I. OBJECTIVELY THIS SACRIFICE WAS AS PERFECT AS THE OFFERERS COULD MAKE IT. Clearly they aimed at presenting a perfect offering. This is exhibited—
 1. In the number of offerings. Seven was regarded as a sacred and perfect number.
 2. In the victims offered. The most valuable that were used for sacrifices.
 3. In the kind of offerings. They were burnt-offerings, which were presented without any reserve, being entirely consumed in honour of the Divine Being.
 II. SUBJECTIVELY THIS SACRIFICE WAS VERY IMPERFECT, AND EVEN SINFUL. In the sentiments and motives of the offerers there was much that was erroneous and evil.
 1. The sacrifice was offered with an admixture of faith and superstition.
 2. The sacrifice was offered under the impression that the offering was meritorious on the part of the offerers, and placed God under an obligation to them.
 3. The sacrifice was offered as a means to induce God to change His mind.
 4. The sacrifice was offered with a view of obtaining permission and power to curse the people of God.
 Learn: 1. That the true value of sacrifice is to be looked for not in the quantity or quality of the offering, but in the spirit of the offerer.
 2. Trusting in Christ Jesus for acceptance, let us present ourselves to God. "God must be worshipped with our best. A man's best is himself; and to sacrifice this is the true sacrifice."
 3. He who has truly given himself to God will keep back nothing from Him. (*W. Jones*)

VERS. 5-12. How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed?—*Balaam's first parable; or, the blessedness of the people of God*:—Balaam's declaration of the happiness of Israel sets forth the blessedness of the people of God.
 I. IT IS PLACED BEYOND THE POWER OF THEIR ENEMIES.
 II. IT CONSISTS IN THEIR SEPARATION FROM THE UNGODLY. In three respects were the Israelites separated from other nations.
 1. Politically they were independent of them.
 2. Morally they were separated from them.
 3. By the possession of peculiar privileges they were separated from them.
 III. IT CONSISTS ALSO IN THEIR VAST NUMBERS.
 1. Unlimited as regards time.
 2. Unlimited as regards place.
 3. Unlimited as regards race or class.
 IV. IT CONSISTS ALSO IN RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHARACTER.
 V. IT IS IN SOME RESPECTS DESIRED EVEN BY THE UNGODLY. (*W. Jones*)
Balaam's eulogy on Israel:—1. He pronounceth them safe, and out of the reach of his envenomed darts.
 (1) He owns the design was to curse them (ver. 7).
 (2) He owns the design defeated, and his own inability to accomplish it. He could not so much as give them an ill word or an ill wish (ver. 8).
 (a) The weakness and impotency of his magic skill, for which others valued him so much, and doubtless he valued himself no less. He was the most celebrated man of that profession, and yet owns himself baffled. God had warned the Israelites not to use divination (Lev. xix. 31), and this providence gave them a reason for that law by showing them the weakness and folly of it. As they had seen the magicians of Egypt befooled, so here the great conjuror of the East (Isa. xlvii. 12, 13, 14).
 (b) It is a confession of the sovereignty and dominion of the Divine power. He owns that he could do no more than God would suffer him to do; for God could overrule all his purposes and turn his counsels headlong.
 (c) It is a confession of the inviolable security of the people of God.
 Note—1. God's Israel are owned and blessed of Him. He has not cursed them, for they are delivered from the curse of the law; He has not abandoned them, though mean and vile.
 2. Those that have the good-will of heaven have the ill-will of hell; the serpent and his seed have an enmity to them.
 3. Though the enemies of God's people may prevail far against them, yet they cannot curse them: that is, they cannot do them any real mischief, much less a ruining mischief, for they cannot separate them from the love of God (Rom. viii. 39).
 2. He pronounceth them happy—in three things.
 (1) Happy in their peculiarity, and distinction from the rest of the nations (ver. 9). It is the duty and honour of those that are dedicated to God to be separated from the world, and not to walk according to the course of it. Those who make conscience of peculiar duties may take the comfort of peculiar privileges, which it is likely Balaam has an eye to here; God's Israel shall not stand upon a level with other nations, but be dignified above them all, as a people near to God and set apart for Him.
 (2) Happy in their numbers; not so few and despicable as they were represented to Him, but an innumerable company which made them both honourable and formidable (ver. 10). Balak would have him see the utmost part of the people (chap. xxii. 41), hoping

the more he saw of them the more would he be exasperated against them, and throw out his curses with the more keenness and rage; but it proved quite contrary; instead of being angry at their numbers he admired them. The better we are acquainted with God's people the better opinion we have of them. He takes notice of the number—(a) Of the dust of Jacob, *i.e.*, the people of Jacob, concerning whom it was foretold that they should be as the dust for number (Gen. xxviii. 14). Thus he owns the fulfilling of the promise made to the fathers, and expects that it should be yet further accomplished. (b) Of the fourth part of Israel; alluding to the form of their camp which was cast into four squadrons under four standards. Note, God's Israel is a very great body; His spiritual Israel is so, and they will appear to be so, when they shall all be gathered together unto Him in the great day (Rev. vii. 9). (3) Happy in their last end. Let me die the death of the righteous Israelites, that are in covenant with God, and let my last end, or future state, be like theirs, or my recompense, *viz.*, in the other world. Here—(a) It is taken for granted that death is the end of all men; the righteous themselves must die; and it is good for each of us to think of this with application, as Balaam himself doth here, speaking of his own death. (b) He goes upon the supposition of the soul's immortality, and a different state on the other side death, to which this is a noble testimony, and an evidence of its being anciently known and believed. For how could the death of the righteous be more desirable than the death of the wicked upon any other account, but that of a happiness in another world, since in the manner and circumstances of dying we see all things come alike to all? (c) He pronounceth the righteous truly blessed, not only while they live, but when they die; which makes their death not only more desirable than the death of others, but even more desirable than life itself; for in that sense his wish may be taken. Not only when I do die, let me die the death of the righteous; but I could even now be willing to die, on that condition that I might die the death of the righteous and take my end this moment provided it might be like his. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*)

The distinctive character of God's people:—I. THE TWOFOLD QUESTION PROPOSED. 1. "How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed?" This supposes that God had blessed Israel. To be blessed of the Lord is all that a man can desire. But who are they that are blessed of God? (1) They on whom God has set His love; not for anything in them to merit that love. (2) When that solemn engagement was entered into, the Book of Eternal Life was written, and the names of those ordained to it written therein. 2. "How shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied?" The idea refers to warfare (1 Sam. xvii. 45). God's spiritual Israel, whose names are in the Book of Life, are they whom God hath not defied, that is, He hath made them more than conquerors through Him that loved them. And, in order to see this, we must look upon them as being in Christ, their Covenant Head, from all eternity. So that, just as He came off more than conqueror over all His spiritual foes, so shall they. II. NOTICE HOW CONSPICUOUS ISRAEL IS IN THE EYES OF GOD. 1. "For from the top of the rocks I see him." We may regard God as saying this of His people, chosen in Christ. (1) There is the rock of the everlasting covenant. He sees them not as sinful. He sees not perverseness in them, but He sees them accepted in the Beloved, and made complete in Him. (2) There is the rock of sovereign grace. (3) There is the rock of God's faithfulness. 2. From the hills I behold him. (1) God's eternity. (2) God's unchangeableness. III. THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF ISRAEL FROM THE WORLD. "Lo, the people shall dwell alone," &c. God's regenerated blood-bought people, as a spiritual fact, live alone. True, they are in the world, perform its duties, and are reckoned among the nations, but they are not of the world (John xv. 19). As soon as God calls them in His grace, puts His Spirit in them, and makes them new creatures in Christ Jesus, from that time they may be said to live alone. For, let a regenerated person live in the same house in which are a number of unregenerate persons, his own relatives, he lives alone, for he has desires and feelings and spiritual sympathies different from theirs. His dwelling-place is on high; he walks with God in the light of the living; the Spirit of God draws his affections upwards, so that he may be said to live alone, so far as outward society goes. Yet he is not alone, for he has the presence of God with him. (*J. J. Eastmead.*)

The people shall dwell alone.—Israel dwelling alone:—I. THE EXACT FULFILMENT OF THIS ANCIENT PREDICTION, IN EVERY DIFFERENT AGE CONSTITUTES ONE OF THE MOST ASTONISHING FEATURES OF JEWISH HISTORY. 1. Travellers have related that the deep red waters of the Rhone, flowing into the Lake of Geneva, may afterwards be traced for miles and miles; the dark, turbid stream of the river still refusing to mingle with the clear waters of the lake. And thus it is, and ever

has been, with the Jews. Like that river they have in every age continued a distinct people, and this too amidst circumstances which, it might have been thought, must have inevitably broken down every middle wall of partition between them and others. 2. And there is yet another consideration. It is without a parallel in the history of the world. In every case where even the most discordant elements have been thrown together, they have imperceptibly blended in the course of ages. II. SOME OF THE IMPROVING REFLECTIONS WHICH IT MAY BE INTENDED THAT WE SHOULD DERIVE FROM THE PROPHECY. 1. There is a national use to be made of this prediction of Balaam. What is literally true of Israel is spiritually true of England. We, as a people, may be said to be "dwelling alone." In regard to our mercies, our privileges, and our blessings, how much have we received above all other people under heaven! No slavery tolerated amongst us—law for the poorest—protection for the weakest, and the homes of England bright and happy—such as are found nowhere else. And above all the rest, the greatness of our religious privileges. 2. But, from the national, let us turn to the individual application of the prophecy. Let us admonish you that there is an important sense in which every Christian must "dwell alone." You cannot follow Christ and yet be like other men. (*H. Hutton, M.A.*) *The true Israel dwelling alone, and not reckoned among the nations:*—This text is a prophecy, and hath more steps towards its accomplishment than one. The prosperity and distinction of a far more illustrious family than the house of Israel are intended here. While, therefore, the literal Israel are the type, the prophecy is to be applied to the saints of God in every age as the antitype. I. SPECIFY SOME CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL, STRONGLY TYPICAL OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN ALL AGES. In this view, the history of Israel becomes an instructive emblem of the original state, deliverance, pilgrimage, and happy rest of the ransomed of the Lord. II. SPECIFY SOME OF THE PECULIARITIES WHICH DISTINGUISH THEM FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD. My text represents them as a distinct incorporated society. They are a people—a people dwelling—a people dwelling alone—and a people who shall not be reckoned among the nations. They are a distinct people, as to their extraction, as to their language, as to their privileges, as to their objects of pursuit, as to their manners, as to their allies, as to their sorrows, and as to their joys. III. POINT OUT WHENCE IT IS THAT THE REDEEMED OF THE LORD ARE SUCH A SINGULAR PEOPLE. "They shall not be reckoned among the nations." Literally has this prediction been accomplished in the history of the posterity of Jacob. Understanding the prediction in relation to God's redeemed people, I have these four particulars to adduce, in accounting for this singularity. They are not reckoned among the nations. 1. Because they were ordained to this distinction in the electing purpose. 2. Because they were consecrated to this singularity by the blood of the Surety. 3. Because they are disposed by the grace of God to choose this distinction for themselves. 4. Because natural men possess no inclination to submit to their restrictions. Upon a review of all that has been said do not you perceive—(1) That regeneration, or the new birth, produces an immense change at once upon the nature, the state, the temper, and manners of men? They keep themselves "unspotted from the world," by "walking in the fear of the Lord." (2) See the reality, as well as importance, of the distinction between the Church and the world. (*W. Taylor.*) *An appeal in behalf of the Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews:*—How awful is the contrast in this history between the mind of God and the designs and wishes of man! And I am disposed to think that such a reference will lead us to the conclusion that the conduct of men in all ages has borne a resemblance to that of the king of Moab in this particular instance; and that the people whom God has especially distinguished and blessed has been singularly the object of the contempt or cruelty of man. I. In the first place, we are to EXAMINE THE CONTRAST IN DIFFERENT AGES BETWEEN THE DESIGNS OF GOD AND THE CONDUCT OF MAN TOWARDS THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL. 1. And here it is scarcely necessary to observe that the persecution of the Jews on their journey to the promised land was not confined to the instance recorded in the text. The Egyptian persecution, for instance, has scarcely any parallel in history. 2. But let us pass on to another period. It pleased God, in a most singular manner, to stir up the mind of Cyrus to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem. But no sooner was the merciful design developed, than the hostility of man discovered itself. The books in which the history of the rebuilding of the temple is recorded, describe a succession of the most criminal plots to resist its progress. 3. Thus, also, at a third period. No epoch is more distinguished by the merciful designs of God in favour of the Jews than the time of our Lord's appearance upon earth. One of the highest evidences of the favour of God

is the gift or increase of the means of religious instruction. Consider, then, the peculiar privileges of the Jews at the coming of Christ. But how were they regarded by the inhabitants of the world? They were neglected, and they were oppressed. They were enslaved by the Romans, and every species of indignity was inflicted upon them. 4. But let us now come to a fourth period, viz., to our own days. And here it is necessary to observe that, notwithstanding the continued unbelief of the Jews, the merciful intentions of God towards His prostrate people are as obvious now as at any other period of their history. They are indeed fallen, but is the patience of God therefore towards them exhausted—has He no mercies in store for them—does He mean to leave them in the dust? Such is the design of God with regard to the people of Israel, which is revealed to ourselves. And now let us contrast it with the conduct of mankind. Consider, then, the contempt in which the Jews are almost universally held. Is not the word Jew a name almost of execration among many? But can such a feeling be made to harmonise with the designs of God? Can the voice of insult have any concord with the lofty and triumphant songs and triumphs of prophecy? II. I proceed to EXAMINE SOME OF THE REASONS BY WHICH THIS OPPOSITION TO THE WILL OF GOD IS JUSTIFIED. 1. Some persons attempt to vindicate their neglect of the Jews by a reference to the crimes of this people in the earlier stage of their history. But then, are we to be the administrators of Divine vengeance? Are we, by a sort of posthumous retribution, to visit the crimes of other ages upon the people of this? 2. A second reason for this neglect of the Jews is founded upon the defects of their present character. Can a people such as these merit any public regard? Are they not stamped with all the features most offensive to God and to good men? These also are facts not to be disputed. Their rejection of Christ has brought with it a train of the most tremendous curses: His “blood” has been and is “upon them and upon their children.” Their moral defects spring from their religious defects. They want honesty, because they are ignorant of Christ. They want purity, because they have never been led to the fountain which “cleanseth from all sin.” Give them, under God, a knowledge of their Saviour, and you shall see the graces of Christianity bursting upon the barren soil, the water rushing from the rock, and the wilderness blossoming like the rose. 3. Again, a third class of objectors say, “Why not leave the Jews as you find them? It is inhuman to disturb their repose, and introduce faction among them.” To this I answer, If the conduct of the friends of this society is intolerant, it is the intolerance of Heaven: it is the intolerance of the “good Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep.” 4. A fourth class of objectors have said, “You take upon yourselves to be, not only the interpreters, but the agents and executors of prophecy. Because God has predicted that the Jews are to be restored, you assume that He means you to be the administrators of His plans.” We answer, no; we are not following the voice of prophecy, which may apply to others as well as to ourselves: we are obeying the command of God, which must apply to ourselves in common with all Christians. 5. Again, it has been said by some, “We discover no particular encouragement to undertake the conversion of the Jews at the present moment, either in the circumstances of our own country, or in those of the world in general.” To this I reply, that I do discover such encouragement. I discover it in the dislocation of the Mahometan power, which has always been the grand political barrier to Jewish restoration. I discover it in the fact that many of the Jews themselves entertain the same opinion. I discover it in the remarkable circumstance, which appears to be well authenticated, of many Jews having manifested of late a singular disposition to migrate to their own land. I hear again the voice of Him, who condescended to spring from a Jewish mother, and to dwell upon its favoured soil, calling upon us to teach all nations, “beginning at Jerusalem.” “The age of chivalry is gone.” And God be praised that it is, if by that term is designated the unnatural combinations of pious zeal and fiery ambition, by which the Crusaders were characterised. But, thank God, the age of Christian zeal is not gone. And to that zeal I would now present an adequate, a sublime, a most interesting object. It is before men inflamed by this holy ambition I would lift up the banner of the Cross. Oh, remember that even now “the gates of the daughter of Zion lament and mourn, and that she, being desolate, sits on the ground.” (*J. W. Cunningham, M.A.*) *Balaam's vision and prayer*:—I. HIS SPLENDID VISION. 1. He saw the pleasant tent-life of the people. Reposing peacefully on the strong arm of the Lord. Every truly good man's life is an illustration. 2. He saw the shadow of Israel's impending victory. 3. He saw Israel's most savage foe, Balak, chained to his lair. II. HIS BEAUTIFUL PRAYER. 1. He believed

in death, aye, in two sorts of death ; he puts the death of the righteous over against the death of the wicked, though he makes no mention of the latter. 2. He believed that the death of the righteous was always desirable. (*W. V. Young.*) *The vision from the rocks* :—So from these desert lands, and these desert hills, we gaze upon the Church on her way to Canaan, about to be settled in the blessed land and holy city. And when we gaze, what do we see? I. THE RUGGEDNESS OF THE LAND OF OUR PRESENT SOJOURN. It is the region of hostility as well as barrenness. This is not our rest. These dark mountains are not our home. II. THE GLORIOUS LAND. Afar off just now, but still visible, still beautiful. It is the paradise of God ; it is the new Jerusalem ; the city which hath foundations ; the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. III. A PEOPLE DELIVERED FROM A PRESENT EVIL WORLD. Once in bondage, now free ; once groaning under oppression, now in the service of a heavenly Master, and heirs of the world to come ; the Red Sea crossed, and now between them and their persecutors an iron wall. Forgiven and redeemed ; with their backs on Egypt, and their faces to Jerusalem. IV. A PEOPLE SUSTAINED BY JEHOVAH HIMSELF. Theirs is the hidden manna, the water from the smitten rock. Jehovah feeds them ; Jehovah gives them the living water. It is not man but God who cares for them. V. A PILGRIM BAND. They are strangers on the earth ; this is not their home ; here is not their city. Their loins are girt, and their staff is in their hand, and they are hastening onward. No sitting down ; no taking ease ; no folling of their hands. Forward, still forward, is their watchword ! VI. A PEOPLE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE. Their ransom has been blood ; and they are not their own. Another life has gone for theirs. VII. A PEOPLE LOVED WITH AN INFINITE LOVE. The banner that is over them is love. The song they sing is love, "Unto Him that loved us." It is a love which passeth knowledge ; a love without bound or end ; a love eternal and Divine. VIII. A PEOPLE PREPARING TO PASS OVER TO THE GOODLY LAND. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*)

Ver. 10. *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!*—*The end of the righteous desired* :—Carlyle, in his "History of the French Revolution," tells us of a Duke of Orleans who did not believe in death ; so that when his secretary stumbled on the words, "The late King of Spain," he angrily demanded what he meant by it. The obsequious attendant replied, "My Lord, it is a title which some of the kings of Spain have taken." We know that all our paths, wind as they may, will lead to the grave. A certain king of France believed in death, but forbade that it should ever be mentioned in his presence. "And if," said he, "I at any time look pale, no courtier must dare, on pain of my displeasure, to mention it in my presence" ; thus imitating the foolish ostrich, which, when pursued by the hunter, and utterly unable to escape, is said to hide its head in the sand, fancying that it is secure from the enemy which it cannot see. I trust that, being sane men, you desire to look in the face the whole of your future history, both in the present world and in worlds beyond the region of sight ; and, foreseeing that soul and body must part in the article of death, you are desirous to consider that event, that you may be prepared for it. I. Balaam's wisdom CONCERNING DEATH. He anxiously desired that he might die such a death as the righteous die. 1. Truly we commend his choice, for, in the first place, it must, at the least, be as well with the righteous man when he comes to die, as with any other man. By the righteous man we mean the man who has believed in Jesus, and so has been covered with Christ's righteousness, and moreover, has by the power of the Holy Spirit received a new heart, so that his actions are righteous both towards God and man. A certain carping infidel, after having argued with a poor countryman who knew the faith, but who knew little else, said to him, "Well, Hodge, you really are so stupid that there is no use arguing with you. I cannot get you out of this absurd religion of yours." "Ah! well," said Hodge, "I dare say I am stupid, master, but do you know we poor people like to have two strings to our bow?" "Well," said the critic, "what do you mean by that?" "Master, I'll show you. Suppose it should all turn out as you say ; suppose there is no God, and there is no hereafter, don't you see I am as well off as you are? Certainly, it will not be any worse for me than it will be for you, if we both of us get annihilated. But don't you see if it should happen to be true as I believe, what will become of you?" 2. There is this to be said for the righteous man : he goes to the death chamber with a quiet conscience. It has been clearly ascertained that in the event of death, the mind is frequently quickened to a high degree of activity, so that it thinks more perhaps in the course of five minutes than it could have done in the course of years at other

times. Persons who have been rescued from drowning, have said that they imagined themselves to have been weeks in the water, for the thoughts, the many views and visions, the long and detailed retrospect seemed to them to have required weeks, and yet the whole transpired in a few seconds. Frequently towards the last the soul travels at express speed, traversing its past life as though it rode upon the lightning. Ah! then how blessed is that man who, looking back upon the past, can see many things of which conscience can approve! 3. Again, the righteous man, when he dies, does not lose his all. With every other man the sound of "earth to earth, dust to dust, and ashes to ashes," is the end of present seeming wealth and the beginning of eternal and real want. But the Christian is not made a bankrupt by the grave; death to him is gain. "Go," said the dying Saracen hero, Saladin, "take this winding sheet, and as soon as I expire, bear it on a lance through all the streets, and let the herald cry as he holds aloft the ensign of death, 'This is all that is left of Saladin, the conqueror of the East.'" He need not have so said if he had been a Christian, for the believer's heritage is not rent from him, but opened up to him by the rough hand of death. The world to come and all its infinite riches and blessedness are ours in the moment of departure.

4. "Let me die the death of the righteous" may well be our wish, because he dies with a good hope. Peering into eternity, with eyes marvellously strengthened, the believer frequently beholds, even while he is yet below, something of the glory which is to be revealed in him. 5. Moreover, the believer dies in the arms of a friend. I do not say in the arms of a mortal friend, for it has fallen to the lot of some Christians to be burnt at the stake; and some of them have rotted to death in dungeons; but yet every believer dies in the arms of the best of friends. Precious is communion with the Son of God, and never more so than when it is enjoyed upon the verge of heaven. 6. Lastly, when the good man dies, he dies with honour. Who cares for the death of the wicked? A few mourning friends lament for a little time, but they almost feel it a relief within a day or two that such a one is gone. As for the righteous, when he dieth there is weeping and mourning for him. Like Stephen, devout men carry him to the sepulchre, and make great lamentation over him. II. Balaam spoke concerning the godly man, of HIS LAST END. I do not know that this wicked prophet, whose eyes were once opened, knew anything about this latter end, as I shall interpret it; but you and I do know, and so let us use his words, if not his thoughts. God has endowed us with a spiritual nature which shall outlive the sun, and run on coeval with eternity. Like the years of God's right hand, like the days of the Most High, has God ordained the life of souls to be. Now, I can well believe that the most of us wish that our position after death may be like that of the righteous. 1. The first consideration in death is that the spirit is disembodied. I should desire to be like a Christian in the disembodied state, because he will not be altogether in a new and strange world. Some of you have never exercised your spirits at all about the spirit-world. You have talked with thousands of people in bodies, but you have never spoken with spiritual beings; to you the realm of spirit is all unknown; but let me tell you, Christians are in the daily habit of communing with the spirit-world, by which I mean that their souls converse with God; their spirits are affected by the Holy Spirit; they have fellowship with angels, who are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them that are the heirs of salvation. 2. After the judgment is pronounced, the disembodied spirit dwells in heaven. Some of you could not be happy if you were allowed to enter that heaven. Shall I tell you why? It is a land of spirit, and you have neglected your spirit. There is a story told of a young woman who dreamed that she was in heaven unconverted, and thought she saw upon the pavement of transparent gold, multitudes of spirits dancing to the sweetest music. She stood still, unhappy, silent, and when the King said to her, "Why do you not partake in the joy?" she answered, "I cannot join in the dance, for I do not know the measure; I cannot join in the song, for I do not know the tune"; then said He in a voice of thunder, "What dost thou here?" And she thought herself cast out for ever. If you do not learn heaven's language on earth you cannot learn it in the world to come. If you are not holy you cannot be with holy saints. 3. After awhile our bodies will be raised again; the soul will re-enter the body; for Christ has not only bought the souls of His people, but their bodies too. "Awake, ye dead! awake! and come to judgment! come away!" Then up will start the bodies of the wicked. I know not in what shapes of dread they will arise, nor how they will appear. But this I know, that when the righteous shall rise they will be glorious like the Lord Jesus; they shall have all the loveliness which heaven itself can give them. III. We

have to make A PRACTICAL USE OF THE WHOLE. Behold the vanity of mere desires. Balaam desired to die the death of the righteous, and yet was slain in battle fighting against those righteous men whom he envied. There is an old proverb which says, "Wishers and woulders make bad housekeepers"; and another which declares, "Wishing never filled a sack." Mere desiring to die the death of the righteous, though it may be natural, will be exceedingly unprofitable. Stop not there. Have you never heard the old classic story of those ancient Gauls who, having once drunk the sweet wines of Italy, constantly, as they smacked their lips, said one to another, "Where is Italy?" And when their leaders pointed to the gigantic Alps crowned with snow, they said, "Cannot we cross them?" Every time they tasted the wine the question was put, "Where is Italy? and cannot we reach it?" This was good plain sense. So they put on their war-harness, and marched to old Rome to fight for the wines of Italy. So every time you hear of heaven, I should like you, with Gothic ardour, to say, "Where is it? for I fain would go." And happy should I be if men here would put on the harness of the Christian, and say, "Through floods and flames for such a conquest, to drink of such wines well refined, we would fain go to the battle that we may win the victory." Oh, the folly of those who, knowing and desiring this, yet spend their strength for nought! The Roman Emperor fitted out a great expedition and sent it to conquer Britain. The valiant legionaries leaped ashore, and each man gathered a handful of shells, and went back to his barque again—that was all. Some of you are equally foolish. You are fitted by God for great endeavours and lofty enterprises, and you are gathering shells: your gold and your silver, your houses and your lands, and heaven and everlasting life you let go. Like Nero, you send to Alexandria for sand for your amusements, and send not for wheat for your starving souls. "Well," cries one, "how is heaven to be had?" It is to be had only by a personal seeking after it. I have read of one who, when drowning, saw the rainbow in the heavens. Picture him as he sinks; he looks up, and there, if he sees the many-coloured bow, he may think to himself, "There is God's covenant sign that the world shall never be drowned, and yet here I am drowning in this river." So it is with you. There is the arch of God's promise over you, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," and yet, because you believe not in Him, you will be drowned in your sins. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

Balaam:—I. THE MAN. II. THE CIRCUMSTANCES. III. THE WISH. 1. Natural. 2. Insincere. 3. Inconsistent. Lessons: 1. A good wish alone will never save the soul. 2. Even knowledge of the consequences of sin will not restrain a wicked man. 3. As wishes, knowledge, and human strength are insufficient, seek for Divine grace. (Preacher's Analyst.)

The death of the righteous:—I. RIGHTEOUS MEN DIE. II. BAD MEN WOULD DIE LIKE THEM. 1. The death of the righteous is a desirable death. No moral remorse, no terrible forebodings. Peaceful conscience. Glorious hope. 2. This desirable death is only gained by a righteous life. (Homilist.) The end attained by effort:—No results are attained without the diligent application of means, and no end is reached without persistent effort. 1. With respect to earthly things this proposition needs no argument. There is nothing valuable attained without labour and patience. Is knowledge? Is wealth? Is fame? Is influence? Is dignity? 2. It is well to know, then, that the spiritual kingdom is not under one law and the material under another. God's laws traverse the whole of His creation. 3. Learn here—(1) That supine waiting for righteousness to be conveyed to us from without is supreme foolishness. Ask, knock, seek! (2) That the spirit of work must be infused into our Christianity. (3) That we shall reap what we sow; and in proportion to our diligence in sowing. (Preacher's Monthly.)

The prayer of Balaam:—I. THAT NO MAN OUGHT TO EXPECT, OR HOPE, TO DIE THE DEATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS, WHO WILL NOT LEAD THE LIFE OF THE RIGHTEOUS. If a thorn-bush could bring forth grapes, or a thistle figs, we should not know what was coming next: certainty, as to causes and effects, would be at an end, and our ideas would be but chaos. So likewise if a bad life could lead to a good death, or if he who would none of the holy beginnings of the righteous could come at last to an end like his, all our moral ideas would be upset, and confusion worse confounded would ensue as to our duties, the consequences of human acts, and the relation of cause to effect in the spiritual sphere. The sight of the unity and harmony of God's laws in nature leads to faith in the truth and equity of His dealings with men as moral and responsible beings; and no clear mind can help seeing the force of the analogy. Nor can this argument be shaken by any theory

about the efficacy of what are commonly known as death-bed repentances. Who knows anything about the worth of such changes? Are they really changes? II. WISHES, HOWEVER EARNEST, DO NOT OF NECESSITY BRING WITH THEM THE THING WISHED FOR. Why should the wish for eternal good have a power which no wish for temporal good possesses? If the mere wishing for what you want in this life does not give the thing wished for, how can you have, for a mere wish, the glories and rewards of the life to come? (*Morgan Dix, D.D.*) *The happiest end of life*.—1. The righteous life insures the happiest end—a happy future for the soul. 2. To end well our life is a noble ambition. 3. Let us cultivate this desire, for it will fashion our lives, if it be a strong and constant motive. (*Hom. Monthly.*) *Upon the character of Balaam*.—These words, taken alone, and without respect to him who spoke them, lead our thoughts immediately to the different ends of good and bad men. It is necessary particularly to observe what Balaam understood by righteous. And he himself is introduced in the Book of Micah explaining it; if by righteous is meant good, as to be sure it is. “O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal.” From the mention of Shittim it is manifest that it is this very story which is here referred to, though another part of it, the account of which is not now extant, as there are many quotations in Scripture out of books which are not come down to us. “Remember what Balaam answered, that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord,” *i.e.*, the righteousness which God will accept. Balak demands, “Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression; the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” Balaam answers them, “He hath showed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” Here is a good man expressly characterised, as distinct from a dishonest and superstitious man. No words can more strongly exclude dishonesty and falseness of heart than “doing justice” and “loving mercy”; and both these, as well as “walking humbly with God,” are put in opposition to those ceremonial methods of recommendation which Balak hoped might have served the turn. From hence appears what he meant by the righteous whose death he desires to die. The object we have now before us is the most astonishing in the world: a very wicked man, under a deep sense of God and religion, persisting still in his wickedness, and preferring the wages of unrighteousness, even when he had before him a lively view of death, and that approaching period of his days which should deprive him of all those advantages for which he was prostituting himself; and likewise a prospect, whether certain or uncertain, of a future state of retribution: all this joined with an explicit ardent wish that, when he was to leave this world, he might be in the condition of a righteous man. What inconsistency, what perplexity is here! With what different views of things, with what contradictory principles of action, must such a mind be torn and distracted! And yet, strange as it may appear, it is not altogether an uncommon one: nay, with some small alterations, and put a little lower, it is applicable to a very considerable part of the world. For if the reasonable choice be seen and acknowledged, and yet men make the unreasonable one, is not this the same contradiction, that very inconsistency which appeared so unaccountable? To give some little opening to such characters and behaviour, it is to be observed in general that there is no account to be given in the way of reason of men’s so strong attachments to the present world: our hopes and fears and pursuits are in degrees beyond all proportion to the known value of the things they respect. This may be said without taking into consideration religion and a future state; and when these are considered, the disproportion is infinitely heightened. Now, when men go against their reason, and contradict a more important interest at a distance for one nearer, though of less consideration, if this be the whole of the case, all that can be said is that strong passions, some kind of brute force within, prevails over the principle of rationality. However, if this be with a clear, full, and distinct view of the truth of things, then it is doing the utmost violence to themselves, acting in the most palpable contradiction to their very nature. But if there be any such thing in mankind as putting half-deceits upon themselves, which there plainly is, either by avoiding reflection, or (if they do reflect) by religious equivocation, subterfuges, and palliating matters to themselves, by these means conscience may be laid asleep, and they may go on in

a course of wickedness with less disturbance. All the various turns, doubles, and intricacies in a dishonest heart cannot be unfolded or laid open; but that there is somewhat of that kind is manifest, be it to be called self-deceit or by any other name. To bring these observations home to ourselves: it is too evident that many persons allow themselves in very unjustifiable courses, who yet make great pretences to religion, not to deceive the world—none can be so weak as to think this will pass in our age—but from principles, hopes, and fears respecting God and a future state, and go on thus with a sort of tranquillity and quiet of mind. This cannot be upon a thorough consideration and full resolution that the pleasures and advantages they propose are to be pursued at all hazards, against reason, against the law of God, and though everlasting destruction is to be the consequence. This would be doing too great violence upon themselves. No, they are for making a composition with the Almighty. These of His commands they will obey; but as to others, why, they will make all the atonements in their power—the ambitious, the covetous, the dissolute man, each in a way which shall not contradict his respective pursuit. Besides these, there are also persons who, from a more just way of considering things, see the infinite absurdity of this, of substituting sacrifice instead of obedience; there are persons far enough from superstition, and not without some real sense of God and religion upon their minds, who yet are guilty of most unjustifiable practices, and go on with great coolness and command over themselves. The same dishonesty and unsoundness of heart discovers itself in these another way. In all common ordinary cases we see intuitively at first view what is our duty, what is the honest part. This is the ground of the observation that the first thought is often the best. In these cases doubt and deliberation is itself dishonesty, as it was in Balaam upon the second message. That which is called considering what is our duty in a particular case is very often nothing but endeavouring to explain it away. Thus those courses which, if men would fairly attend to the dictates of their own consciences, they would see to be corruption, excess, oppression, uncharitableness; these are refined upon—things were so and so circumstantiated—great difficulties are raised about fixing bounds and degrees, and thus every moral obligation whatever may be evaded. That great numbers are in this way of deceiving themselves is certain. There is scarce a man in the world who has entirely got over all regards, hopes, and fears concerning God and a future state; and these apprehensions in the generality, bad as we are, prevail in considerable degrees: yet men will and can be wicked, with calmness and thought; we see they are. There must therefore be some method of making it sit a little easy upon their minds, which in the superstitious is those indulgences and atonements before mentioned, and this self-deceit of another kind in persons of another character. And both these proceed from a certain unfairness of mind, a peculiar inward dishonesty, the direct contrary to that simplicity which our Saviour recommends, under the notion of becoming little children, as a necessary qualification for our entering into the kingdom of heaven. But to conclude: How much soever men differ in the course of life they prefer, and in their ways of palliating and excusing their vices to themselves, yet all agree in the one thing, desiring to die the death of the righteous. This is surely remarkable. The observation may be extended further, and put thus: Even without determining what that is which we call guilt or innocence, there is no man but would choose, after having had the pleasure or advantage of a vicious action, to be free of the guilt of it, to be in the state of an innocent man. This shows at least the disturbance and implicit dissatisfaction in vice. If we inquire into the grounds of it, we shall find it proceeds partly from an immediate sense of having done evil, and partly from an apprehension that this inward sense shall one time or another be seconded by a higher judgment, upon which our whole being depends. As we are reasonable creatures, and have any regard to ourselves, we ought to lay these things plainly and honestly before our mind, and upon this act as you please, as you think most fit; make that choice and prefer that course of life which you can justify to yourselves, and which sits most easy upon your own mind. And the result of the whole can be nothing else but that with simplicity and fairness we keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right, for this alone shall bring a man peace at the last. (*Bp. Butler.*) *Balaam's vain wish*:—I. WHAT DOES IT MEAN? He knew that he must die, and that after death he must live for ever. He had seen men die; he had seen the men of Aram, and Midian, and Moab die; and he had seen the mourners sorrow for them as those who had no hope. He would not die their death. He had at least heard of other deaths, for he evidently knew much of Israel's history. He

had heard of the deaths of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in other days; and, it may be, he had heard of Aaron's death on Mount Hor just a short time before; and he knew how the righteous die. But the words mean more than this, for he speaks not merely of death, but of something beyond death—the last end of the righteous. There is no repetition of the other. There is a parallelism indeed, but it is an ascending one; this second part containing more than the first; and by “last end” the seer meant resurrection—a truth far more widely known, at least among the nations in any way linked with patriarchal traditions, than is generally admitted. Balaam's prayer was, “Let me share the death of the righteous; and let me share his resurrection too.” How comprehensive! II. WHAT STATE OF FEELING DOES IT INDICATE? Sick at heart, and weary of the hollowness of his own heathenism, and all that it could give him, he cries aloud from the depths of a dissatisfied heart, “Let me die the death of the righteous.” Disappointed and sorrowful, he sees the eternal brightness in the distance, with all its attraction, and in the bitterness of his spirit cries out, “Would God that I were there!” The feeling soon passes off, but while it lasts it is real. But, with all its reality, it leads to nothing. Balaam's wish is a very common one, both in its nature and in its fruitlessness. Sometimes it is a mere passing wish, called up by vexation and weariness; at other times it is a deep-breathed prayer; but in both cases it is too often ineffective, leading to nothing. Men, young as well as old, get tired of life, sick of the world and its vanities. They see that none of its pleasures can last. When it has done all it can, it still leaves them with a troubled conscience, an aching head, and an empty heart. In too many cases this desire is transient and sentimental. It leads to no action, no result. It vanishes like a bright rainbow from a dark cloud, and there is no change. Is it to be so with you? If hungry, a wish won't give you bread; or, if thirsty, a wish won't quench your thirst; or, if suffering, a wish won't soothe your pain; or, if dying, a wish won't bring back health into your pale cheek and faded eye. Yet a wish may be a good beginning. All fruit begins with buds and blossoms; and though these often come to nought, yet sometimes they end in much. That wish may be the beginning of your eternal life. It may lead to much; oh, let it lead you on! (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *Balaam's lights and shadows*:—Balaam's character is a deep one—one of amazing power, of mixed good and evil, with a strife of elemental forces in his soul. The desire to die the death of the righteous is founded upon great intelligence, deep penetration into the ruling forces of the moral world, even if unaccompanied by the moral force to be righteous. 1. The highest knowledge of Divine things does not ensure salvation; one who knows what it is may fail of its light, peace, and final reward. 2. In all men this law of righteousness is found, as well as the consciousness that, if followed, it will lead to good. 3. All opposition to the Church or kingdom of God must fail, because the Church is founded on that law of righteousness or right which is the law of being and the very essence of God. 4. Death and its connection with righteousness, or what it opens to the righteous. (*J. M. Hoppin, D.D.*) *The death of the righteous*:—The thought which I wish to inculcate is that a Christian life is the only sure ground of hope in death. I would represent the work of life and the preparation for death as one and the same thing; and would attach to every portion of healthful, active, busy life the associations of deep solemnity, which are commonly grouped around the closing moments of one's earthly pilgrimage. Let me first ask your attention to an invariable law of our being of which we are too prone to lose sight, namely, that our success and happiness in every new condition of life depend upon our preparation for that condition. Our earthly life is made up of a series of states and relations, each of which derives its character from the next preceding. Thus, “the child's the father of the man.” Now, how is it that men will not apply this same law to that future state of being on which they hope to enter? How fail they to perceive that the heavenly society, like every other state of being, demands preparation, and that preparation for it cannot be a mere formula of holy words mumbled by dying lips, but must run through the habits, the feelings, the affections, the entire character? You must have entered here upon the duties and the joys of the spiritual life in order to make them even tolerable to you hereafter. And spirituality of thought, temper, and feeling must, in some measure, have detached you from earthly objects, and made them seem inferior and unessential goods, in order for you to resign them without intense suffering. This view demands, as a preparation for death, not only a decent formalism, but a strictly spiritual religion—a religion which has its seat in the affections. Now, why are we not all diligently fitting

ourselves for the home where we hope to go? Were it some distant city or foreign country upon our own planet where we expected to fix our residence, how earnestly should we seek an interest in its scenes, its resources, its life! How eagerly should we avail ourselves of every opportunity of training in whatever might be peculiar in its condition and modes of living! How fast, in the interval before embarking, should we become, in desire and feeling, citizens of our future home! And shall the city of God form the only exception to this rule? Shall we turn our backs upon it till driven to the shore where we must embark, and then go we know not whither? Shall not prayer, and faith, and hope lay up treasures against our arrival thither? Thus do the law of human life and the Word of God, while they make us solicitous to die the death of the righteous, unitedly urge upon us the essential importance of living his life. The same lesson must have impressed itself upon all who have been in any degree familiar with the closing scenes of life. It is not the opportunity of a death-scene, not the hurried and unnatural utterances of a last hour, but the whole previous character, the direction which the face and steps had borne before death seemed near, that cherishes or crushes our hope for the departed. (*A. P. Peabody.*) *Selfishness, as shown in Balaam's character:*—From first to last one thing appears uppermost in this history—Balaam's self; the honour of Balaam as a true prophet—therefore he will not lie; the wealth of Balaam—therefore the Israelites must be sacrificed. Nay, more, even in his sublimest vision his egotism breaks out. In the sight of God's Israel he cries, "Let me die the death of the righteous"; in anticipation of the glories of the eternal advent, "I shall behold Him, but not nigh." He sees the vision of a kingdom, a Church, a chosen people, a triumph of righteousness. In such anticipations, the nobler prophets broke out into strains in which their own personality was forgotten. Moses, when he thought that God would destroy His people, prays in agony, "Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book." Paul speaks in impassioned words, "I have continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites." But Balaam's chief feeling seems to be, "How will all this advance me?" And the magnificence of the prophecy is thus marred by a chord of melancholy and diseased egotism. Not for one moment—even in those moments when uninspired men gladly forget themselves; men who have devoted themselves to a monarchy or dreamed of a republic in sublime self-abnegation—can Balaam forget himself in God's cause. Observe, then, desire for personal salvation is not religion. It may go with it, but it is not religion. Anxiety for the state of one's own soul is not the healthiest or best symptom. Of course every one wishes, "Let me die the death of the righteous." But it is one thing to wish to be saved, another to wish God's right to triumph; one thing to wish to die safe, another to wish to live holily. Nay, not only is this desire for personal salvation not religion, but if soured, it passes into hatred of the good. Balaam's feeling became spite against the people who are to be blessed when he is not blessed. He indulges a wish that good may not prosper, because personal interests are mixed up with the failure of good. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Desiring the death of the righteous:*—When the indifferent and wicked reflect upon the change produced at death, and see that what appears dark to them is to the believer bright; when they see one of themselves racked with fear, and goaded by the stings of a too late awakened conscience, while the righteous is calm and resigned, they will readily adopt the language of the worldly prophet and say, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." I. **WHENCE ARISES THIS DESIRE?** I believe it arises from the conviction that those things on which we place our affections in this life are not such as will afford peace in the hour of death. They who are most blindly attached to the god of this world are among the readiest to confess the transitory nature of present things, and their utter inability to afford comfort at the last. You desire to "die the death of the righteous"; are you, then, resting your confidence on Jesus Christ as chief, and deriving happiness from other things, only as He shall be pleased to give them you? Do you look upon the world as something which must soon be left behind, and which will not, as your friends, exist in another state? II. **WHAT THAT DEATH IS, AND WHEREFORE DESIRABLE.** The death-chamber of the confirmed saint of God is a scene eloquent to all who have ever beheld it. It reveals the assured faithfulness of God's promises, and shows the firm foundation of their hopes, who have made those promises the rock of their salvation. The righteous is not without bodily anguish at his last end. He knows

by experience the sorrows and sufferings that are the lot of man; but he knows that his Saviour has endured them too, and it is but fitting the disciple should walk in the steps of his heavenly Master. But how tranquil is his mind amid them all, as he draws near to the last moment of his earthly career! At that hour, when the false hopes of the wicked are shaken and proved worthless, then the hopes of the righteous are increasing in brightness. The dying Christian has his times of temptation when "the swellings of Jordan" rise up around his soul. Satan sometimes is allowed to buffet him sorely. Yet "as thy day is, so thy strength shall be." And hence, amid all his depression, amid all his conflicts, as the shinings of God's love fall upon his sinking soul, his courage revives, and he can rejoice with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. The stronger his faith, the brighter are his hopes, and therefore the higher and more heavenly his joys. What says He on this subject? "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee." "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." "If a man keep My saying, he shall never taste of death." "Them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." "O death! I will be thy plague! O grave! I will be thy destruction!" "Right precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." These are the promises which lie thickly scattered in the pages of God's own blessed Word. Thus you have a faint idea of what the death of the righteous is—full of faith, deep confidence, and heavenly peace. Are you anxious to realise it for yourselves? well ye may be. How, then, is it to be gained? Not by putting off the work of salvation to the last. Though you desire the peaceful end of the righteous, are not some of you deluding yourselves in this way? Oh! what folly! How know you that your death will come preceded by a long sickness or affliction as your warning? (*R. Allen, B.A.*) *The Christian's final blessedness*:—1. From the clearness of his views. Wise unto salvation. 2. From the strength of his faith. 3. From the firmness of his trust. Assurance that a mansion is prepared for him, and that a merciful Saviour will welcome him to glory and immortality. 4. From the slightness of the hold which this world has on him. 5. From the familiarity with which the consistent follower of the Lord regards a state of future existence. (*W. H. Marriott.*) *Balaam's wish*:—I. THE RIGHTEOUS DIE, AND IN THE SAME MANNER OUTWARDLY AS THE WICKED DO. For Christ, in His first coming, came not to redeem our bodies from death, but our souls from damnation. His second coming shall be to redeem our bodies from corruption into a "glorious liberty." Therefore wise men die as well as fools. Use 1. It should enforce this excellent duty, that considering we have no long continuance here, therefore, while we are here, to do that wherefore we come into the world. Use 2. And let it enforce moderation to all earthly things. II. THE ESTATE OF THE SOUL CONTINUES AFTER DEATH. For here he wisheth to die the death of the righteous, not for any excellency in death, but in regard of the continuance of the soul after death. Reason 1. And it discovers, indeed, that it hath a distinct life and excellency in itself, by reason that it thwarts the desires of the body when it is in the body. Reason 2. And we see oftentimes, when the outward man is weak, as in sickness, &c., then the understanding, will, and affections, the inward man, is most sublime, and rapt unto heaven, and is most wise. III. THERE IS A WIDE, BROAD DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE DEATH OF THE GODLY AND OF THE WICKED. In their death they are—1. Happy in their disposition. What is the disposition of a holy man at his end? His disposition is by faith to give himself to God, by which faith he dies in obedience; he carries himself fruitfully and comfortably in his end. And oftentimes the nearer he is to happiness, the more he lays about him to be fruitful. 2. Besides his disposition, he is happy in condition; for death is a sweet close. God and he meet; grace and glory meet; he is in heaven, as it were, before his time. What is death to him? The end of all misery, of all sin of body and soul. It is the beginning of all true happiness in both. 3. And blessed after death especially; for then we know they are in heaven, waiting for the resurrection of the body. There is a blessed change of all; for after death we have a better place, better company, better employment; all is for the better. IV. EVEN A WICKED MAN, A WRETCHED WORLDLING, MAY SEE THIS; HE MAY KNOW THIS HAPPINESS OF GOD'S PEOPLE IN DEATH, and for ever, and yet notwithstanding may continue a cursed wretch. Use 1. Seeing this is so, it should teach us that we refuse not all that ill men say; they may have good apprehensions, and give good counsel. Use 2. It should stir us up to go beyond wicked men. Shall we not go so far as those go that shall never come to heaven? Let us therefore consider a little wherein the

difference of these desires is, the desires that a Balaam may have, and the desires of a sound Christian, wherein the desires of a wicked man are failing. (1) These desires, first of all, they were but flashes : for we never read that he had them long. These enlightenings are not constant. (2) Again, this desire of this wretched man, it was not from an inward principle, an inward taste that he had of the good estate of God's children, but from an objective admiration of somewhat that was offered to his conceit by the Holy Ghost at this time. (3) Again, in the third place, this desire of the happiness of the estate of God's children, it was not working and operative, but an uneffectual desire. (4) Where desires are in truth, the party that cherisheth those desires will be willing to have all help from others to have his desire accomplished. (5) Again, true desires of grace, they are growing desires. Though they be little in the beginning, as springs are, yet as the springs grow, so do the waters that come from them. So these desires, they grow more and more still. The desires of a blessed soul, they are never satisfied till it come to heaven. (6) And then they are desires that will not be stilled. Desires, I confess, are the best character to know a Christian; for works may be hypocritical, desires are natural. Therefore we ought to consider our desires, what they are, whether true or no; for the first thing that issues from the soul are desires and thoughts. Thoughts stir up desires. This inward immediate stirring of the soul discovers the truth of the soul better than outward things. (7) Whether we desire holiness, and the restoration of the image of God, the new creature, and to have victory against our corruptions. Balaam desired happiness, but he desired not the image of God upon his soul; for then he would not have been carried with a covetous devil against all means. No; his desire was after a glimpse of God's children's glory only. A wicked man can never desire to be in heaven as he should be; for how should he desire to be in heaven? to be freed from sin, that he may praise God and love God; that there may be no combat between the flesh and the spirit. Can he wish this? No. His happiness is as a swine to wallow in the mire, and he desires to enjoy sensible delights. (*R. Sibbes, D.D.*) *The death of the righteous desired*.—I. THAT DEATH IS THE APPOINTED LOT OF ALL MEN. II. THAT THE RIGHTEOUS POSSESS ADVANTAGES IN DEATH UNKNOWN TO ALL OTHERS. 1. Generally peaceful. 2. Sometimes triumphant. 3. Always safe. III. THE PERSUASION THAT THE RIGHTEOUS POSSESS ADVANTAGES IN DEATH UNKNOWN TO ALL OTHERS, LEADS MANY TO ADOPT THE EXCLAMATION IN THE TEXT. 1. It is adopted by the trembling inquirer who has just perceived the necessity and value of true religion. 2. It is adopted by the decided Christian, whose eye is directed to the end of his course. 3. It is the language of those who partially feel the value of religion, but whose hearts are undecided before God. 4. It is the language of the openly wicked and profane. They live as sinners, but they would die as saints. (*Essex Remembrancer.*) *Mere desire useless*.—1. Balaam teaches us the uselessness, I may say the danger, of conviction without repentance, of a knowledge of what is right without an earnest pursuit of holiness. 2. And this comes nearly to the same thing as saying, that Balaam's history shows us the need of practical piety, sacrificing ourselves to God, body and soul, while we have something worthy of being sacrificed; curbing our desires and passions before they die out of themselves; living a life of obedience and submission while yet the temptation of the world is strong to follow a quite different course. What is the use of a man sighing for the death of the righteous? The death is in general like the life. A far wiser prayer than Balaam's would be this: "Give me grace to lead the life of the righteous, and let all the prime of my health and faculties be consecrated to Thee, O Lord." 3. Lastly, the death of Balaam shows us in a very striking manner the uselessness of such religious aspirations as that in which he indulged. Balaam's worst sins were committed after he had uttered the pious prayer of the text, and his end was miserable. Beware lest any of you be in like manner tempted to evil; you may see the excellence of religion; you may be even led to utter high aspirations for the rest which remains for the people of God; but it is only a diligent walking in God's ways, a constant battle against self and sin and impurity and worldly lusts and the like, a constant serving of God in all things which He Himself has commanded, which can ensure you against making shipwreck of your faith. (*Bp. Harvey Goodwin.*) *The convictions of Balaam*.—I. IT IS VERY EVIDENT THAT THE RULING PASSION OF BALAAM WAS COVETOUSNESS. II. But I wish you, further, to CONSIDER BALAAM AS THE POSSESSOR OF EXTRAORDINARY GIFTS. III. But, lastly, we must CONSIDER BALAAM AS INFLUENCED BY STRONG RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS. We mark them in his anxiety to ask counsel of God—in his confession of sin when withstood by the angel—in his steady

determination to obey the letter of the command—and in the impassioned wish of my text, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.” Now we must not suppose that in all this Balaam was altogether insincere. His whole aim was to try to reconcile his wickedness with his duty; nevertheless, there were times when the better nature struggled hard within him. And is not this just the case of thousands in every age? Are there not many who, when under the influence of an awakened conscience, can melt into tears at the remembrance of past sins and negligences—who feel a momentary desire of attaining heaven? They are borne away by the fervour of the moment, and fancy themselves in earnest. The natural man has been wrought upon, and, for the time, you might fancy him spiritual; but the trance is over, and he is natural still. Beware, then, how you trust to occasional thoughts and feelings. All men, whatever their present life may be, agree in the desire of attaining heaven at the last. And here is the deceptive thing—that the wish for conversion may be mistaken for the act of conversion; the appearance of devotion for the reality of devotion; the elevated thought, the momentary aspiration, for the real abiding work of the Spirit of the Lord. Oh! then, for the grace to make these impressions permanent, so that they may lead onwards to greater watchfulness, more earnest prayer, and more honest strivings against the besetting sin. (*E. Bickersteth, M.A.*) *How good a thing it is to die the death of the righteous*:—There be many ways in which men go out of the world; some withdrawing in carelessness and indifference, some in heaviness and fear, some without hope or expectation, some with a mere wish to make an end of physical discomfort, some hardened in frigid stoicism, and some in a maze of dreams, saying to themselves, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. After no such fashion would we die. There is another manner of departure which leads all the rest in dignity and beauty. It is substantially the same in every age. Joy with peace; a trust in God that rests on strong foundations; a heart confiding in a covenant promise which it knows to be certain and sure; perfect submission to the will which is evermore a will of love; resignation of self and all into those hands which come forth through the gathering darkness; sacrificial surrender gladly paying the debt due to sin;—these signs mark the death of the righteous; whereunto, since Christ came, are to be added the presence of the Saviour, the thought that He has gone that way before us and knows every step of the path, the conviction that to die is gain, the assurance that the Lord shall raise us up at the last day, and that whosoever liveth and believeth in Him shall never die. (*Morgan Dix, D.D.*) *Death of Christian and infidel*:—The French nurse who was present at the deathbed of Voltaire, being urged to attend an Englishman whose case was critical, said, “Is he a Christian?” “Yes,” was the reply, “he is, a Christian in the highest and best sense of the term—a man who lives in the fear of God; but why do you ask?” “Sir,” she answered, “I was the nurse that attended Voltaire in his last illness, and for all the wealth of Europe I would never see another infidel die.” *Piety makes a soft death-pillow*:—A Roman Catholic seeing a Protestant die in peace and triumph, is reported to have said, “If this be heresy, it makes a soft pillow to die on.” *Confidence at death*:—Dr. Simpson on his deathbed told a friend that he awaited his great change with the contented confidence of a little child. As another friend said to him that he might, as St. John at the Last Supper, lean his head on the breast of Christ, the doctor made answer, “I fear I cannot do that, but I think I have grasped hold of the hem of His garment.” (*König's Life of Dr. Simpson.*) *Courage in view of death*:—We are all marching thither. We are going home. Men shiver at the idea that they are going to die; but this world is only a nest. We are scarcely hatched out of it here. We do not know ourselves. We have strange feelings that do not interpret themselves. The mortal in us is crying out for the immortal. As in the night the child, waking with some vague and nameless terror, cries out to express its fears and dreads, and its cry is interpreted in the mother's heart, who runs to the child and lays her hand upon it and quiets it to sleep again, so do you not suppose that the ear of God hears our disturbances and trials and tribulations in life? Do you not suppose that He who is goodness itself cares for you? Do you suppose that He whose royal name is Love has less sympathy for you than a mother has for her babe? Let the world rock. If the foot of God is on the cradle, fear not. Look up, take courage, hope and hope to the end. (*Last words of Ward Beecher's last sermon.*) *A Christian's last end*:—In the life of the good man there is an Indian summer more beautiful than that of the seasons; richer, sunnier, and more sublime than the most glorious Indian summer the world ever knew—it is the Indian summer of the soul. When the glow of youth has departed, when the warmth of middle age is gone, and the buds and blossoms

of spring are changing to the sere and yellow leaf; when the mind of the good man, still and vigorous, relaxes its labours, and the memories of a well-spent life gush forth from their secret fountains, enriching, rejoicing, and fertilising, then the trustful resignation of the Christian sheds around a sweet and holy warmth, and the soul, assuming a heavenly lustre, is no longer restricted to the narrow confines of business, but soars far beyond the winter of hoary age, and dwells peacefully and happily upon the bright spring and summer which await within the gates of Paradise evermore. Let us strive for and look trustingly forward to an Indian summer like this.

Habitual preparation to be made for death:—There are few men, even among the most worldly, who do not expect to be converted before they die; but it is a selfish, mean, sordid conversion they want—just to escape hell and to secure heaven. Such a man says, “I have had my pleasures, and the flames have gone out in the fire-places of my heart. I have taken all the good on one side; now I must turn about if I would take all the good on the other.” They desire just experience enough to make a key to turn the lock of the gate of the celestial city. They wish “a hope,” just as men get a title to an estate. No matter whether they improve the property or not, if they have the title safe. A “hope” is to them like a passport which one keeps quietly in his pocket till the time for the journey, and then produces it; or, like life-preservers which hang useless around the vessel until the hour of danger comes, when the captain calls on every passenger to save himself, and then they are taken down and blown up, and each man with his hope under his arm strikes out for the land; and so, such men would keep their religious hope hanging idle until death comes, and then take it down and inflate it, that it may buoy them up, and float them over the dark river to the heavenly shore; or, as the inhabitants of Rock Island keep their boats, hauled high upon the beach, and only use them now and then, when they would cross to the mainland, so such men keep their hopes high and dry upon the shore of life, only to be used when they have to cross the flood that divides this island of Time from the mainland of Eternity. (H. W. Beecher.) *Frances Ridley Havergal’s death*:—She got her feet wet standing on the ground preaching temperance and the gospel to a group of boys and men, went home with a chill, and congestion set in, and they told her she was very dangerously sick. “I thought so,” she said, “but it is really too good to be true that I am going. Doctor, do you really think I am going?” “Yes.” “To-day?” “Probably.” She said, “Beautiful, splendid, to be so near the gate of heaven.” Then after a spasm of pain she nestled down in the pillows and said, “There, now, it is all over—blessed rest.” Then she tried to sing, and she struck one glad, high note of praise to Christ, but could sing only one word, “He,” and then all was still. She finished it in heaven. (T. De Witt Talmage.) *A glorious death*:—The biographer of Dr. Norman Macleod says that, the night before his death, “he described with great delight the dreams he had been enjoying, or rather the visions which seemed to be passing vividly before his eyes, even while he was speaking. He said, ‘You cannot imagine what exquisite pictures I see! I never beheld more glorious Highlands, majestic mountains and glens, brown heather tinted with purple, and burns—clear, clear burns; and above, a sky of intense blue—so blue, without a cloud.’” On the day of his death he said: “I have had constant joy, and the happy thought continually whispered, ‘Thou art with me!’ Not many would understand me, they would put down much I have felt to the delirium of weakness, but I have had deep spiritual insight.” Very shortly before he died he said to one of his daughters, “Now all is perfect peace and perfect calm. I have glimpses of heaven that no tongue, or pen, or words can describe.”

Ver. 19. God is not a man, that He should lie.—*The unchangeable God*:—I. GOD IS UNCHANGEABLE. God cannot change; to suppose that He could change would be to suppose Him not Divine. A finite being may refuse to change, adhering rigidly to some purpose; but all the while that being is capable of change, there is nothing in his nature which makes it absolutely impossible that he should change. But it is so with God. We here speak of unchangeableness in regard of God’s dealings with His creatures, though of course it is also in Himself, in His essence, in His own property, that God is unchangeable; and it is an amazing and overwhelming contemplation, that of our Creator as in no respect capable of change, immutable because infinitely perfect. II. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN GOD AND MAN. This unchangeableness is indispensable to the Creator, but incommunicable to the creature. It is indispensable to the Creator, forasmuch as the Creator must be in every respect infinite. But all change ends in addition or diminution: if anything be added, He

was not infinite before; if anything be diminished, He is not infinite after. But if indispensable in the Creator, it is incommunicable to the creature. We say nothing against the powers of God, when we say that God could not have made an unchangeable creature. Must not that which is unchangeable be self-existent, and therefore eternal? That which has already had beginning, has already undergone change—the change from nothing to something, so that a creature, because not eternal, cannot be unchangeable. God alone is unchangeable, because God alone is eternal. It is self-evident that He cannot make an eternal creature, and therefore certain that He cannot make an unchangeable creature. The creature, then, is changing, the sun as well as the atom, the archangel no less than the worm (Psa. cii. 25–27). Was it only of the material fabric of the earth, with its many productions—of the firmament, with its majestic troop of stars, that the Psalmist asserted this? Nay, it is true of the intelligent creation as well as of the material. And spirits are immortal: sparks from the eternal fire, they shall never be quenched; but though immortal, they shall not be the same; indestructible, they shall be always on the march. Angel and man, they shall not, as we have already said, be ever at a stand. Stand! when there are new heights to be scaled, new depths to be fathomed? Nay, it were imperfection, it were wretchedness. It is the glory of the Creator that He never changes; it is the glory of the creature to be always changing. Eternity shall be one mighty progress to all except the Eternal. “I am Jehovah, I change not, the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The word of God unchangeable*:—1. “God is not a man, that He should lie.” Balaam knew how capable he himself was of deceit and falsehood, how liable to be changed by bribery from one course to another; and it is possible that he might have entertained such unworthy notions of the Almighty as to imagine Him also movable and uncertain. But God has no admixture of evil, no imperfection; nor can He “be tempted with evil.” Men have their own corrupt interests to serve; their own gain to study, their own gratification to seek: and when these things cannot be so readily compassed by integrity, recourse is often had to deceitful dealing. It may not always be that a man’s word is actually broken; but there is very commonly, in the children of this world, some kind of double dealing to suit a carnal purpose. From all this, and from all approach to this, the Lord is purely free: He can neither deceive nor be deceived. 2. “Neither the son of man, that He should repent,” or change His purpose. Man is ignorant and short-sighted; often knows not what will be for the best: and the plan, which he had contrived with his utmost skill, is not seldom injurious; and thus he is compelled to alter and relinquish. But God is all-wise: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!” 3. We may infer—(1) That all the Divine judgments against sin and sinners will be infallibly executed. And—(2) That every promise of God to His people will, in due season, be abundantly accomplished. 1. The imminent danger of sin, and the certain ruin from it, if persisted in, are by no means believed and perceived, as they ought to be. The Almighty has declared, throughout His word of truth, that He is a God of holiness; and that in unholiness, in disobedience, in unrepented guilt, no man can be accepted, no man can approach Him. 2. And, blessed be the holy name of God, the gracious promises of mercy to His faithful and obedient servants are not less frequent than the threatenings of wrath upon the impenitent and forgetful. (*J. Slade, M.A.*) *The unchangeableness of Jehovah*:—I. SOME MEN THINK THAT GOD WILL LIE. God has told us, with strong and repeated asseverations, that “we must be born again” (John iii. 7); but this is totally disbelieved by—1. The profane. They persuade themselves that such strictness in religion, as is implied in the new birth, is not necessary; and that they shall go to heaven in their own way. 2. The self-righteous. These consider regeneration as a dream of weak enthusiasts, and are satisfied with the “form of godliness, without” ever experiencing “the power” of it. 3. The hypocritical professors of religion. These, having changed their creed, together with their outward conduct, fancy themselves Christians, notwithstanding their faith neither “overcomes the world,” nor “works by love,” nor “purifies their hearts.” That all these persons think God will lie, is evident beyond a doubt; for if they really believed that old things must pass away and all things become new (2 Cor. v. 17), before they can enter into the kingdom of heaven, they would feel concerned to know whether any such change had taken place in them; nor would they be satisfied till they had a Scriptural evidence that they were indeed “new creatures in Christ Jesus.” II. OTHERS FEAR HE MAY LIE. This is common with persons—1. Under conviction of sin. When men are deeply

convinced of sin, they find it exceedingly difficult to rest simply on the promises of the Gospel; such as John vi. 37; Isa. i. 18, lv. 1. 2. Under temptation or desertion. God has declared that He will not suffer His people to be tempted above what they are able to bear (1 Cor. x. 13). But when they come into temptation, they are apt to say, as David, "I shall one day perish," &c. (1 Sam. xxvii. 1). III. BUT GOD NEITHER WILL NOR CAN LIE. 1. He will not lie. (1) Let us hear the testimonies of those who have tried Him. Moses (Deut. xxxii. 4); Joshua (Josh. xxiii. 14); Samuel (1 Sam. xv. 29). (2) Let us attend to God's own assertions and appeals (Isa. v. 4, xlix. 19). Would He ever venture to speak thus strongly on His own behalf if His creatures could make good their accusations against Him? (3) Let us look to matter of fact. Are not His past actions so many types and pledges of what He will hereafter perform? (2 Pet. ii. 4-9; Jude 7). 2. He cannot lie. Truth is as essential to the Divine nature as goodness, wisdom, power, or any other attribute; so that He can as easily cease to be good, or wise, or powerful, as He can suffer one jot or tittle of His word to fail. (*C. Simcox, M.A.*) *The Lord is unchangeably true in all His ways, words, and works*:—His decrees are immutable and irrevocable, and without shadow of turning (Psa. cv. 7, 8, 10). To this purpose the apostle saith, "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. xi. 29). By all these places we see that God is unchangeable in His mercy and goodness toward His Church and children. The reasons follow to be considered. 1. First, He is not like unto man, His ways are not like man's ways, nor His thoughts like unto man's thoughts; but as far as heaven is distant from the earth, so far are the works of God from ours. We know by experience the changeable nature of man. He is constant to-day, he changeth to-morrow. He loveth one day, and hateth another. 2. Secondly, His love and mercy to His people is not changeable as the moon, unconstant as the wind, floating as the sea, uncertain as the weather, but stable as the earth that cannot be moved out of his place, and steadfast as Mount Sion that remaineth for ever. This will plainly appear unto us if we consider the similitudes whereby it is expressed. His love is like to the covenant of waters, and as sure as the promise that He made to Noah, that the waters should no more overflow the whole earth, as the prophet Isaiah teacheth, chap. liv. 7, 8, 9. 3. Again, His goodness is as the ordinance of God, that hath set an order for summer and winter, for day and night, for seed-time and harvest, for cold and heat, which shall not be changed, therefore the Lord saith (Jer. xxxi. 35, and xxxiii. 20). Nay, His mercy is said to be more stable than the mountains (Isa. liv. 10). Now let us come to the uses of this doctrine. 1. First, hereby we learn that God is to be preferred before all creatures. 2. Secondly, we may from hence assure ourselves that God will make us unchangeable like Himself, and we may rejoice in the comfort of this His favour. For seeing His nature is unchangeable, He will make us in our measure partakers of immortality. This is a great comfort unto us in these days of sorrow, to consider that the time will come, when our state shall be changed, and we continue for ever without change. Here we are subject to many turnings and returnings, but after this life shall be no more place for changing; our happiness shall be unchangeable, and firmly established with God. This the prophet sets down (Psa. xvi. 12). 3. Thirdly, it teacheth that it is time for us to repent and turn unto God. An unchangeable God, an unchangeable word. Let us be transformed into the obedience of it. It is not a leaden rule to bend every way to us. All our ways must be framed unto it. And when once we are turned to God, let us not return back again to our old ways, but persevere constant unto the end. The unchangeable God requireth an unchangeable servant. 4. Lastly, herein is great comfort offered to the servants of God, as on the other side horror to the wicked and disobedient. For seeing God is immutable, we may from hence take strong consolation by former examples of God's dealing toward His children, and in all temptations build ourselves upon that blessed experience, as upon a sure foundation that can never fail us. (*W. Attersoll.*)

Ver. 20. He hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it.—*Immutable benedictions*:—I. BLESSINGS ARE DECREED FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD. The difficulty of believing in the glorious truth of the supreme blessedness of the children of God is so common that there must be some reasons for it. 1. One reason is that the largest blessings belong to the future. For the present, Christians have to endure the trials of a wilderness pilgrimage. We need faith to expect the good things of the unseen future. 2. A deeper reason is that the best blessings are spiritual. To the carnal mind they appear wearisome in the extreme, just as the exquisite tones of the

finest melody do to a man who has no ear for music. Here also men need faith to believe that the highest blessings are necessarily at present above their appreciation.

II. THE ATTEMPT TO REVERSE THESE BLESSINGS RESULTS IN THE INCREASE OF THEM. The evil intention results unwittingly in a beneficent action. Consider some of the applications of this principle of Providence.

1. The captivity. Nebuchadnezzar, who aimed at destroying the Jewish nation, was indirectly its great benefactor in fulfilling the Divine prophecies of necessary chastisement and forcing the people to a painful discipline, which effectually and for ever purged them of their old besetting sin of idolatry.
2. The temptation of Christ. The tempter sought to overthrow the Son of God and Saviour of the world. But the result of the forty days' trial in the wilderness was that Christ came forth fitted to be our great high priest by means of the very endurance of that temptation.
3. The death of Christ. His enemies hoped to overthrow His cause by means of this. But it was overruled to secure His triumph and to accomplish the great end of His mission.
4. The persecution of the Church. The Christians, scattered by the persecution that followed the death of Stephen, fled from Jerusalem only to spread the gospel in all directions, and so to increase their own numbers and to magnify the name of their God.
5. The troubles of life generally. The sufferer is described as being "delivered unto Satan." The motive of Satan must be purely malignant. Yet the suffering he inflicts is expressly designed for the good of the sufferer—"that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. v. 5).

III. THE BLESSINGS OF WHICH THE PEOPLE OF GOD CANNOT BE ROBBED BY THEIR MOST VIOLENT FOES MAY BE LOST BY THEIR OWN SIN. (*W. F. Adeney, M.A.*) *The curses of man turned into blessings by God*:—The principle embodied here is this: that when God hath determined to bless His people, His purposes will be executed even by those whose intent it is only to reverse them. This is the solution of all the apparent mysteries and incongruities in the present state of things: and it will apply—I. TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AT LARGE—and, next, to every individual among the people of God. To this Church—that is, this army of the living God, though separated in different divisions, we look, in the interpretation of God's promises, as Balaam looked upon Jacob in his goodly tents, and Israel in his outstretched tabernacle. To these we refer the benediction of the royal psalmist, "They shall prosper that love Thee"; and to these we apply what may be termed the reversed invocation of the text—a curse becoming a blessing—"Behold, I have received commandment to bless; and He hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it." But it is not less needful, though it be less pleasing, to observe how, as in the case of Israel, the most severe and searching probation came upon them—not amidst the perils and privations of the wilderness, but amidst the abundance and prosperity of the promised land. So the Church, when the fires of persecution had been extinguished, was, and still continues to be, in danger far more imminent. We must beware, lest those prevail who would openly assault her bulwarks, and attempt her battlements in vain. As to the end, indeed, all is safe, and all is sure; God has determined to bless, and earth and hell cannot reverse it (Isa. ii. 2; Hab. ii. 14; Phil. ii. 10, 11). But it is not the less needful to beware lest, in the meantime, corruption be introduced amongst us from an unsuspected quarter, by intermixture with the enemies of God, while, amidst the rising mists of error, our candlestick burns dimly, if even, through apostasy, it be not removed out of its place. Intercourse with the irreligious and unbelieving, whatever be the pretext, is plainly to be suspected and to be shunned. The blessing of God upon a good cause may be forfeited, and will be nullified, by alliance with wicked men. What else can the crew expect, if they allow themselves to be piloted by traitors, but that they shall strike on a rock suddenly, and go down into the depths of destruction?

II. I proceed, however, to the second, and more practical part of the subject—THE APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLE EMBODIED IN THE TEXT TO EACH INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER. Rightly understood, and closely applied, it is to him a covert from all the storms of life, a shield against the fiery arrows of the wicked one, a very present help in time of trouble. God hath blessed, man cannot reverse it: and, however the world may plot, and however it may appear to the servant of the Most High, there is One who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. The devices of man may appear to be successful, but it is His counsel only that shall abide. It is very important, however, to keep in mind that, while Scripture develops the purposes of God's will, it does not profess to reveal the processes of God's work. It states a definite and determined end, but it makes no specific mention of the means. "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me," declares the Psalmist, but how, and by whom, God only knows. "He that hath

begun a good work in you," says the apostle, "will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ"; but who can say whether the work will proceed in sunshine or in clouds? Perhaps the latter; not improbably the latter. It is enough for us to know that God is working out a blessing: we must not be cast down, though it come through the channel of a calamity, and with the aspect of a curse. The richest stream of benefit and glory that ever flowed forth to a lost and polluted world was thus opened. How did Christ redeem us from the curse of the law but by being made a curse for us? Many sought to quench God's light by lifting up the Redeemer on the Cross, and they thus imparted to it instrumentally a power which in the end shall draw all men unto Him. (*T. Dale, M.A.*)

Vers. 21-24. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel.—*The prophecies of Balaam*:—Prophecy is not Fatalism, but in many cases, at least, a forecasting of the certain consequences of such and such moral antecedents. And this view of prophecy leads me to that which is, after all, the most important aspect of the prophecies of Balaam. Here, in the blessings he pronounced on Israel, we have an authoritative declaration of the natural and inevitable outcome of the then condition of the chosen people; blessings which, indeed, they sometimes reaped, and sometimes failed to reap—varying in their relations to the God who spake to them by the lips of Balaam—but blessings which it is open for us to reap, if we will only follow the Lord perfectly and with all our hearts. I. WE HAVE HERE A DECLARATION OF THE PRINCIPLES THAT LIE AT THE FOUNDATION OF ALL TRUE NATIONAL AND CHURCH LIFE. 1. And the first of these principles that I shall refer to, is that mentioned in the language of the text: "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perversity in Israel." But if we are to accept these words as in any sense descriptive of the actual condition of the Jewish people at this moment, we must understand them in relation to the words that follow: "The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them." That is, there was none of that iniquity and perverseness in Israel which is the root and substance of all iniquity and perverseness, viz., the denial of God's presence in the midst of them, and a refusal to submit to Him as their King. Whatever else they were (and they had their faults), the Israelites were not a godless people; and being at heart a godly and God-fearing people, Jehovah saw fit to interpret all the other features of their character according to this ruling disposition of their lives, and to look over and excuse many other imperfections for the sake of this predominating excellence. 2. Another element that characterised the moral condition of the Jewish people, was that of the separation from the other nations of the earth. Their separation was their security. 3. But there is, even still farther, a third element belonging to the moral condition of the Jewish people that must not be overlooked; and that is the principle of order that obtained amongst them. "Behold," said the Psalmist, "how good and how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Psa. cxxx. 1). And unity and order are intimately related to each other. For order both expresses and promotes unity. And unity makes order possible. II. THERE IS HERE ALSO DECLARED TO US THE BLESSEDNESS OF THOSE IN WHOM THESE PRINCIPLES ARE REALISED AND EMBODIED. And the prophet lavisheth his praises on the Israelitish people, as the representatives of those who realise and embody these principles. Thus, e.g., he compares the tents of Israel to outspread valleys full of verdure and fertility; and again, to gardens by the riverside, always fruitful and beautiful; and again he speaks of them as trees of lign aloes, which the Lord had planted, laden with the most delicious fragrance; and as cedar trees beside the waters, full of stately, sober beauty (chap. xxiv. 6). And the blessedness of such he describes as not only personal, but diffusive. The godly are as water-bearers, pouring water out of their buckets on the "dry and thirsty land where no water is," and causing peace and plenty to abound (chap. xxiv. 7). They themselves increase on every hand; and as they increase, the welfare of the world advances. "Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel?" (chap. xxiii. 10). It was not that Israel was at that moment an innumerable people, for this book is a record of the numbering of the people of Israel; but Israel had, in the moral principles that governed its action and life, the germs of indefinite extension and enlargement. And wherever it went it carried blessings for the nations in its hand. III. THE DIGNITY AND MAJESTY OF THOSE WHO ARE THUS BLESSED. Every symbol of strength and vigour, of safety and security, does the prophet press into the service of his eulogy of Israel's greatness. IV. THE ADVANTAGES THAT MAY BE ENJOYED BY THOSE

WHO ARE ONLY SOMEWHAT REMOTELY RELATED TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD. "Come with us," said Moses to Hobab, "and we will do you good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel" (chap. x. 29). There is such a thing as blessedness, by being related to the blessed. And so Balaam says of Israel: "Blessed is he that blesseth thee; and cursed is he that curseth thee" (chap. xxiv. 9; see Matt. x. 40, 42). (*W. Roberts.*) *The justification of God's people*:—What? Was Israel perfect? Was not their entire history one of rebellion and ingratitude and sin? How then could God say He saw no iniquity or perverseness in them? Mark, it is not said that Israel had no iniquity or perverseness. It is said God "beheld" none. Is God, then, the minister of sin? God forbid! He only magnifies the riches of His grace by putting it out of His sight. But is not this a license to the soul to continue in sin, or be indifferent to it? Nay. The love that has pardoned is the love that constrains ever after to "newness of life." But notice again—God was never indifferent to sin in Israel. "He is of too pure eyes to behold iniquity." Yes, the least sin in them was marked and judged with an unsparing hand. But when it came to this, should Satan make use of their sin to cast them out for ever from God—to curse them—then God would see no sin in them. Then His language is, "I have not beheld iniquity in Jacob, nor seen perverseness in Israel." Thus we have seen Israel's complete justification before God. Now let us examine the foundation on which it rests. "God is not a man that He should lie; neither the son of man that He should repent: hath He said and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken and shall He not make it good?" Thus their justification, and everything that follows, rest upon God's unchangeable character. What a rock is that on which the weakest believer rests! What untold blessings are his! and all secured by the faithfulness of that unchanging God. But let us proceed and mark the streams of blessing which flow down to the believer from this Rock. "The Lord his God is with him." What can he lack, having Him? He is with him to supply every need, to lead into every holy path, to unfold to his soul from hour to hour all the riches of His grace, to quicken, to warn, to comfort, to build up, and to carry on that work in the soul which His grace has begun, till it be perfected in glory. Mark the next blessing—"the shout of a king is among them." It is the shout of joy. It is the joy of Christ in His people, and His people in Him: "these things have I spoken unto you that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy may be full." It is the "shout of a king," even of King Jesus, for He has gotten the victory! "Jehovah has triumphed, and His people are free." Mark the next blessing—"God brought them out of Egypt." The song of redemption is now their song, and will be for ever. "He hath, as it were, the strength of an unicorn" (or buffalo); "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." As the sapling grows into the mighty tree, so that no storms can uproot it, so the Christian grows by living upon Christ, and abiding in Him. All the trials of the way are converted into elements of strength. What can harm the child of God, then? What foe can curse him whom God has so blessed? None. "What hath God wrought!" It is all God here; man is nothing. Surely every crown must be laid for ever on the riches of His grace! "Behold the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down till he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain." In the symbol of the lion, under which the Lord's people are here brought before us, we have the victorious onward course of the Church of Christ. The Lord's people are represented as "rising up" in the majesty of Divine strength and power and victory over their spiritual foes. And what is the last feature in the character of the Lord's people presented in this parable? It is victory over every foe at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: "he shall not lie down till he eat of the prey and drink the blood of the slain." To "lie down" is the expression for rest. In the morning of resurrection they will rest, for then every enemy will be given into their hands. (*F. Whitfield, M.A.*) *And the shout of a king is among them.—The best war-cry*:—I. *GOD'S PRESENCE AMONG HIS PEOPLE.* 1. It is an extraordinary presence, for God's ordinary and usual presence is everywhere. Whither shall we flee from His presence? He is in the highest heaven and in the lowest hell; the hand of the Lord is upon the high hills, and His power is in all deep places. Still there is a peculiar presence; for God was among His people in the wilderness as He was not among the Moabites and the Edomites their foes, and God is in His Church as He is not in the world. He saith of His Church, "Here will I dwell, for I have desired it." This is much more than God's being about us; it includes the favour of God towards us, His consideration of us, His working with us. 2. God is with His

people in the entireness of His nature. This is the glory of the Church of God—to have the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghost to be her never-failing benediction. What a glory to have Father, Son, and Holy Spirit manifesting the Godhead in the midst of our assemblies, and blessing each one of us! 3. For God to dwell with us: what a condescending presence this is! And will God in very truth dwell among men? If the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, will He abide among His people? He will! “Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost?” 4. What an awe this imparts to every true Church of God! You may go in and out of certain assemblies, and you may say, “Here we have beauty! here we have adornment, musical, ecclesiastical, architectural, oratorical, and the like!” but to my mind there is no worship like that which proceeds from a man when he feels—the Lord is here. What a hush comes over the soul! Here is the place for the unsandalled foot and the prostrate spirit. Now are we on holy ground. 5. This is the one necessary of the Church: the Lord God must be in the midst of her, or she is nothing. If God be there, peace will be within her walls, and prosperity within her palaces. 6. This presence of God is clearly discerned by the gracious, though others may not know it. II. THE RESULTS OF THIS DIVINE PRESENCE. 1. Leading (ver. 22). We must have the Lord with us to guide us into our promised rest. 2. The next blessing is strength. “He hath as it were the strength of an unicorn” (ver. 22). It is generally agreed that the creature here meant is an extinct species of urus or ox, most nearly represented by the buffalo of the present period. This gives us the sentence—“He hath as it were the strength of a buffalo.” When God is in a Church, what rugged strength, what massive force, what irresistible energy is sure to be there! And how nuntiable is the living force! 3. The next result is safety. “Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel.” The presence of God quietly baffles all the attempts of the evil one. Divination cannot touch a child of God: the evil one is chained. Wherefore be of good courage; if God be for us, who can be against us? 4. Further than that, God gives to His people the next blessing, that is, of His so working among them as to make them a wonder, and cause outsiders to raise inquiries about them. “According to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought?” 5. When God is with His people He will give them power of a destructive kind. Do not be frightened. Here is the text for it: “Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion”—that is, as a lion in the fulness of his vigour—“he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain.” God has put into His Church, when He is in it, a most wonderful, destructive power as against spiritual wickedness. A healthy Church kills error, and tears in pieces evil. III. What can be done for THE SECURING AND PRESERVING OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD WITH THE CHURCH? 1. There is something even in the conformation of a Church to secure this. God is very tolerant, and He bears with many mistakes in His servants, and yet blesses them; but depend upon it, unless a Church is formed at the very outset upon scriptural principles and in God’s own way, sooner or later all the mistakes of her constitution will turn out to be sources of weakness. Christ loves to dwell in a house which is built according to His own plans, and not according to the whims and fancies of men. 2. But next, God will only dwell with a Church which is full of life. The living God will not inhabit a dead Church. Hence the necessity of having really regenerated people as members of the Church. Remember that text: “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living,” and it bears this sense among others, that He is not the God of a Church made up of unconverted people. Oh that we may all live unto God, and may that life be past all question. 3. That being supposed, we next notice that to have God among us we must be full of faith. Do you believe your God? Alas, too many only believe a little! But do you believe His every word? Do you believe His grandest promises? Is He a real God to you, making His words into facts every day of your lives? If so, then the Lord is among us as in the holy place. Faith builds a pavilion in which her King delights to sit enthroned. 4. With that must come prayer. Prayer is the breath of faith. Where prayer is fervent God is present. 5. Supposing there is this faith and prayer, we shall also need holiness of life. You know what Balaam did when he found he could not curse the people. Satanic was his advice. He bade the king of Moab seduce the men of Israel by the women of Moab that were fair to look upon; and he sadly succeeded. So in a Church. The devil will work hard to lead one into licentiousness, another into drunkenness, a third into dishonesty, and others into worldliness.

If he can only get the goodly Babylonish garment and the wedge of gold buried in an Achan's tent, then Israel will be chased before her adversaries. God cannot dwell in an unclean Church. 6. Lastly, when we have reached to that, let us have practical consecration. God will not dwell in a house which does not belong to Him. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

The Divine presence needed in the Church:—There are three special thoughts which come to us in connection with this text. I. The first is, THE ABSOLUTE NEED, IF THE ARMY OF THE LORD IS TO CONQUER, OF THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD AND OF THE REALISATION OF HIS PRESENCE BY THOSE WHO ARE CALLED BY HIS NAME, and wear His armour, and wield His weapons. It pleases the Lord to let us fight His battles, to give us His armour and His weapons, and to inspire us with His courage, and to fill our enemies with His terror. We have no power except it be given us by Him; we can drive out no darkness of heathenism except the Lord be with us. We want more of our own battle-cry, the "shout of our King," telling of His actual presence with His host. II. IT IS ALSO NECESSARY TO REALISE THE ESSENTIAL UNITY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, OF THE ARMY OF THE LIVING GOD. We should pray and work, and earnestly desire that all the people of the Lord may be one. If we want a reason for the little progress made in the conquest of the world of heathenism for the Lord of life and glory, if we want to account for the dark and darkening fringe of sin and misery and unbelief within the borders of our own land, we can find cause enough for these things in our failure to realise and to work and pray for the ideal of the essential unity of the Church of Christ. III. Our text INSPIRES US WITH HOPE. There is no greater need for us, as individuals or as a united body, than hope. And how can we be otherwise than full of hope when we call to mind that the promise is for us, "The shout of a king is among them"? There is hope for ourselves, and hope for others. Life passes on: friends pass away; strength for effort grows less; unavailing efforts stretch out behind us in a long, increasing line, like wounded men falling down to die in the terrible retreat: but still there is hope—hope that will grow and increase, and come daily nearer to its accomplishment. "The shout of a King is among us," and we cannot be moving on to ultimate defeat. There is a battle, terrible enough, to fight; but victory is the end, not defeat. (E. T. Leeke, M.A.) Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob.—*Impregnable security of Israel; God's wondrous doings on their behalf*:—I. THE TRUTH AFFIRMED: "Surely there is no enchantment," &c. The certainty of this may be inferred—1. Because the counsels of God are more than sufficient to baffle the designs and plots of hell. 2. Because the power of Jehovah is ever effectual in thwarting the attacks of the enemies of his people. 3. Because Divine goodness is more than enough to counteract the malevolence of our foes. 4. The resources of God are more than adequate to render all the means of the Church's enemies abortive. II. THE EXCLAMATION UTTERED: "According to this time," &c. 1. What is to be said? "What hath God wrought!" Agents are to be observed, but only God praised. This is to keep up our dependence on God. This is to inspire with adoration and praise. This is to keep human nature in its right place. 2. Who are to say it? (1) Ministers of the gospel. (2) The pious. 3. When should it be said? (1) In times of depression, as the means of consolation. (2) In times of great exertion, as an incitement to perseverance. (3) In times of great success, to give tone to our exultations. (4) It will be reiterated in the world of the beatified for ever. There they will see, in one beautiful series, the doings of God—behold the golden chain entire. Application: 1. Our text may apply to many as to their Christian experience before God. "Remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee," &c. (Deut. viii. 2). 2. The text is appropriate to Christian missions. What enemies, difficulties, and discouragements have been overcome and surmounted! Well may we exclaim, "What hath God wrought!" 3. Let God ever be exalted for the blessings we enjoy, and for all the good done in us and by us. (J. Burns, D.D.) *The blessings of God and the acknowledgment which it demands*:—I. THE SOURCE OF EFFECTUAL BLESSING. It directs us to the Deity, in His essential character, in His active character, and in His relative character. And what is the interference we wish? Various. Sometimes—1. Deliverance—from danger internal and external—"enchantment." 2. Blessing. "I have received commandment to bless," &c. 3. Forbearance. "He hath not beheld iniquity," &c. 4. Stability. "The Lord his God is with him." 5. Complete success. II. THE TIME FROM WHICH HIS INTERPOSITION IS REMARKED. "According to this time it shall be said." The time of—1. Conversion. 2. Renewed devotion. 3. Peculiar providential arrangement. 4. Earnest and decisive spirit of prayer. III. THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT IT DEMANDS.

"It shall be said, What hath God wrought!" 1. Acknowledgment is implied and expected. "God wrought." 2. It is spontaneously offered. "It shall be said." 3. It is a personal and explicit token. "Jacob and Israel." 4. It is to be recorded and gratefully renewed. "According to this time it shall be said," &c. (*Samuel Thodey*.) *A little trust is better than much foresight*:—That must have been a wonderful glimpse into the ways of God with men which led a diviner to deny his own art, and to confess that to wait with childlike confidence on God till in due time He reveals His will is a far greater and more precious gift than to force or surprise the secrets of the future and to pass in spirit through the times to be. God "met" Balaam to purpose when He taught him a truth which men, and even Christian men, have not yet learned—that a little trust is better than much foresight, and that to walk with God in patient and loving dependence is better than to know the things to come. And this insight into the real value of his special gift was part of that training, that discipline, by which, as we have seen, God was seeking to save His servant from his besetting sin; for Balaam was proud of the gift which set him apart from and above his fellows, of the eagle eye and unyielding spirit which made the supernatural as easy and familiar to him as the natural, while they were trembling before every breath of change and finding omens of disaster in the simplest occurrences of daily experience. He was apt to boast that he was the man of an open eye, hearing the voice of God and seeing visions from the Almighty, falling into trances in which the shadows of coming events were cast upon his mind, and that he could read all secrets and understand all mysteries. Unlike the great Hebrew prophets, who humbly confessed that the secret of the Lord is with all who fear Him, and so made themselves one with their fellows, he was perverting his high gifts to purposes of self-exaltation and self-aggrandisement. Was it not, then, most salutary that he should be checked and rebuked in this selfish and perilous course? And how could he be more effectually rebuked than by being shown a whole race possessed of even higher gifts than his own, possessed above all of the gift of waiting for God to reveal His will to them in due time, and so raised out of all dependence on divinations or enchantments? At this spectacle even his own high and sacred endowment seemed but a vulgar toy, and the aspiration was kindled in his breast for that greater good, that greatest of all gifts, the power to walk in ways of righteousness, and to leave the future, with simple trust, in the hands of God. It is a lesson which we still need to learn; for which of us would not rejoice had he prophetic raptures and trances of which to boast, if men looked up to him as possessed of a solitary and mysterious power, and resorted to him that he might forecast their fate and interpret to them the mysteries by which they were perplexed? Which of us does not at times long to pierce the veil and learn how it fares with those whom we have loved and lost awhile, or even what will be the conditions of our own life in years to come or when death shall wear us away, instead of waiting until in due time God shall reveal even this unto us? Let us, then, learn from Balaam, if we have not yet learned it from David or St. Paul, that to rest in the Lord and to wait patiently for Him is a higher achievement than to apprehend all mysteries; and that to do His will in humble trust is a nobler function and power than to foresee what that Will will do. (*S. Cox, D.D.*) **Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all.**—*You cannot neutralise God*:—"Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all." But Balaam said, "No; you cannot treat God's messengers in that way. As a matter of fact they are here; you have to account for them being here, and to reckon with them while they are here." We cannot quiet things by ignoring them. By simply writing "Unknowable" across the heavens we really do not exclude supernatural or immeasurable forces. The ribbon is too narrow to shut out the whole heaven; it is but a little strip; it looks contemptible against the infinite arch. We do not exclude God by denying Him, nor by saying that we do not know Him or that He cannot be known. We cannot neutralise God, so as to make Him neither the one thing nor the other. So Balaam was the greatest mystery Balak had to deal with. It is the same with the Bible—God's supernatural Book. It will not lie where we want it to lie: it has a way of getting up through the dust that gathers upon it and shaking itself, and making its pages felt. It will open at the wrong place; would it open at some catalogue of names, it might be tolerated, but it opens at hot places, where white thrones and severe judgments, and where scales are tried and measuring wands are tested. It will speak to the soul about the wrong-doing that never came to anything, and the wicked thought that would have burned the heavens and scattered dishonour upon the throne of God. (*J. Parker, D.D.*)

Vers. 28-30. Balak brought Balaam unto the top of Peor.—*The wicked are wise in their kind to bring their wicked purposes to pass*:—We may observe by continual experience the nature of ungodly men. They are cunning in their kind; they watch their ways and times to fit them to work out their wicked devices. Balak knew well enough he was not able to meet the Israelites in the open field, and therefore dealeth otherwise. This is it which Stephen in his apology noteth (Acts vii. 19). Thus did Laban deal toward Jacob (Gen. xxxi. 1, 2, 41), changing his mind, revoking his bargains, altering his wages, murmuring at his prosperity, and changing his countenance toward him. This is noted also in the parable recorded (Luke xvi. 8). This we see by many examples. Ahithophel's counsel was esteemed like as one who had asked counsel at the oracle of God, so were all his counsels both with David and with Absalom. The like we see in Herod when he heard of the birth of Christ, as of a new-born King, by the wise men. He pretendeth piety, but useth policy to destroy the babe our Saviour. The same we might observe in the scribes and Pharisees after the ascension of Christ. They spared no means to hinder the course of the gospel (Acts iii.-v.), but used sometimes fair means, sometimes threatenings, sometimes commandments to stop the mouths of the apostles. All which testimonies teach us that which the prophet Jeremiah saith (Jer. iv. 22) of the people in his time agreeable to the truth of this doctrine: "They are wise to do evil, but to do well they have no knowledge." The reasons follow. 1. They serve a cunning master, the author of all confusion, the contriver of all mischief, the worker of all wickedness, that old subtle serpent who worketh in all the children of disobedience (Eph. ii. 2). 2. God giveth even to wicked men wisdom and understanding, to magnify His mercy, who is good to all, and to aggravate their sin, who are made thereby without excuse (Rom. i. 20, 21). Now, the greater His goodness is toward them, the heavier shall His judgment and their punishment be (Luke xii. 48). What is it that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received it, why dost thou not glorify Him of whom thou hast received it? 3. The enemies of God have knowledge, experience, foresight; they are as wise as serpents, as subtle as foxes, to the end God may use them as His rods in correcting His Church and in trying the faith of His people. So He proved the patience of the Israelites by Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and by the cunning and crafty fetches which they practised for their overthrow and destruction. So He tried Joseph and Mary by the dissimulation of Herod, by whom they were constrained to depart out of Judæa and to fly into the land of Egypt. The uses to be made of this doctrine are many. (1) This should, on the other side, teach us to deal wisely and warily with them, lest we be snared and circumvented by them. We are set as upon a hill, we are placed as upon a stage. If we profess Christ Jesus, a small spot will be seen in our garment. It behoveth us, therefore, to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves, according to the counsel of our Saviour, to the end we may stop the mouths of gainsayers. Their wisdom is joined with wickedness; our wisdom must be seasoned with godliness. Their policy is iniquity; with us policy and innocency must accompany together, and kiss one another. Their wisdom is a circumventing by laying of snares; our wisdom must be circumspect in avoiding snares. If we have this wariness mingled with true sincerity, and all our actions without dissimulation, it is both lawful and expedient to set wisdom against wisdom, and policy against policy, and care against care, and understanding against understanding, that so through their subtlety and our simplicity we be not taken in their traps which they have laid for us. (2) It is our duty to pray to God to be delivered from them, and trust in Him for His help. He scattereth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot accomplish that which their hearts have enterprised—an excellent comfort to all the servants of God not to fear the high reaches and deep devices of their enemies. (3) This serveth to reprove two sorts of men that esteem not aright of this worldly wisdom of wicked men; for some are offended at their wisdom because it is so great, others rest contented in it because it is so excellent. (*W. Attersoll.*)

CHAPTER XXIV.

VERS. 1-9. He set his face toward the wilderness.—*The face set toward the wilderness*:—Evidently there is a change at this point in Balaam's method. Hitherto he has played the sooth-sayer. At last he confesses himself vanquished,

and instead of renewing the practices of his magic science, awaits, with eye fixed upon the waste distant desert, a revelation different in kind from any that have gone before it. It was a turning-point in his strange history. Not the first, nor the greatest, yet real, and, would he have had it so, saving. He has learned the helplessness of man striving with his Maker. He has learned the futility of approaching the God of truth with a lie in the right hand. He has learned that to "set the face toward the wilderness" is the one hope and wisdom of inquiring man; to look away from enchantments; to look away from courts and crowds, from pleasures and businesses; to look away from types and forms, and to fix the earnest gaze upon that solitude of earth and heaven which is the presence of the soul in the presence of God. The crisis was lost, we know, upon Balaam. The dreams of avarice and of worldliness prevailed in him, even over the open vision. We cannot alter his destiny; let us learn something from this incident. 1. There is in all of us a strange reluctance to the thing here described—this setting of the face toward the wilderness where God is alone. I might say many things to you of the ministerial man—the man, I mean, whose office it is to communicate with God for the edification of His people. How often, when this ministry, the Church's prophesying, is to be exercised, does the indolent, the half-hearted, the perfunctory minister run to his "enchantments"; to his books and to his manuscripts, to his commentaries; to the old "bakemeats," his own or another's, which have done duty before, and can be made "coldly to furnish forth" another "table"! How often—to change the illustration—does the abler, the more ingenious, the more eloquent minister betake himself to his task of preparation for preaching by a mustering of his own gifts of argument, of rhetoric, of pathos and persuasiveness, as the enchantments by which he is to bring God into these hearts! How often does a man—to use the prophet's strange but expressive metaphor—"sacrifice to his net, and burn incense to his drag"; pay the homage of a gratified vanity to his own performance, count instead of weighing his hearers, and set down all to his own credit in prophesying, of which he should rather say to himself in deepest self-humiliation, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" 2. Yet think not that the Balaams of this age are all prophets, or that the warning is only for the professional teacher. I seem to see a place for it in these lives which minister and people live in common. How often, in the anxious questionings which life brings to all of us—at those dubious turnings which compel decision, and cannot be decided upon twice over—is the temptation powerfully present to seek for some "enchantment" of discrimination between the wrong for us and the right! Who has not made advice such an "enchantment"? "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety"; but then the counsellors must be well chosen, must be honestly sought, must be diligently informed, must be faithfully followed. 3. I would add a word upon the application of the text not to the life, but to the soul. Side by side with a bold scepticism which simply passes by the gospel on the other side there is also an anxiety, a curiosity, to hear, which secures an audience wheresoever there is a preacher, which stimulates all manner of agencies for bringing home the gospel. In the same degree the warning is more urgent, that we confound not, in these highest matters, the "enchantments" and the "wilderness." Who feels not in himself the easiness of listening and the difficulty of praying? Who is not conscious of the temptation to compound for inward torpor by outward bustle, and to make a multiplication of services and communions an apology for neglect and shameful sloth in the nearer and more intimate converse between the soul and its God? (*Dean Vaughan.*) **Balaam . . . the man whose eyes are open.**—*Balaam—the open eye:*—An open eye is a rare thing even in the matters of common experience. They are the few who can see clearly the things which God has set round them in their daily paths. Men of science tell us that it is difficult to meet with a competent observer of even the simplest and most familiar phenomena. Lawyers complain that a good witness, who can tell what he knows, and only what he knows, is as rare. It is supposed by experienced persons that a fact is just the most difficult thing in the world to get at, so few walk with their eyes open and care to make themselves simply conductors of truth. We see things through mists which take the colours of prejudice or passion, and it is but a vague outline of them which meets our sight. "Lord, that our eyes may be opened," is a prayer full of meaning for all of us as we move amidst the realities of our daily lives. In the higher sphere of the being the open eye is rarer still. The realities in that region are solemn things to look upon. There is something awful in their grandeur, and even in their beauty. A man needs courage and faith to face them as they are. I. Balaam was a MAN

WHOSE EYE WAS OPEN IN HIS DAY. He was a man of splendid natural genius. We puzzle over the definition of genius; but perhaps it is only the open eye, the power to see things simply as they are. In every sphere of man's intellectual activity the man of genius is the seer. II. Balaam's is at the same time a CHARACTER OF SINGULAR PERPLEXITY. He had both the open eye and the itching palm. And this condition is far from rare. Splendid endowments are often mated with moral narrowness or feebleness. With many of these men of insight, men with the seer's power, there is a flaw in the thoroughness somewhere. But then these men, when their genius possesses them, rise above the sphere of their humiliation; the temptations which ensnare them snap like the withes of Samson; they see clearly, and declare with the freedom and the force of prophets the things which have been shown to them by the Lord. Lord Bacon may have been capable of very poor ambitions, very grovelling thoughts and actions; but when his genius possessed him, when he loosed his splendid faculty in the quest of truth, the simplest fact became sacred to him; he would not have dared to misrepresent or to tamper with what he saw for worlds. It was thus with Balaam. On the lower level of his life he was grovelling; but when God took possession of his genius he yielded it readily, and then he was true as steel to the vision. III. THE MAN WHOSE EYES WERE OPEN SAW SOME THINGS WITH STARTLING CLEARNESS. Some words of his ring out like trumpet notes through the field of life's battle; they are conceived with a vividness and expressed with a force which makes them prophetic for all ages; we hear from his lips the words of God. 1. The only word which a man can say with power is truth. The word that God also saith, that shall stand (chap. xxii. 38). The counsellor who knows the Divine plan is the man who has power. The position of the Jews among the nations, and the influence which they wielded, which is popularly much under-estimated, rested wholly on the fact that they knew as no other nation knew the Divine counsels, they held the key to the mystery of all these worlds. Balaam saw that the trickster and liar is impotent. Laocoon, locked in the serpent wreaths, wrestling madly, but with the death agony in his face, is not more powerless than the monger of falsehood to escape his doom. The gain is there, it is always there; you can have it if you like by cheating and lying. Balaam saw it, and there was that within him which longed for it. But his eye was open; he dared not touch it. He saw the pure folly as well as the shame of dreaming of it, of thinking that anything but truth, right, and the blessing of God can stand a man in any stead in life, in death, and in the great court of Heaven. 2. He saw with that open eye that the man who stands with God stands absolutely beyond the reach of harm (chap. xxiii. 23). 3. There was a third thing that Balaam saw. The man whom God blesses is blessed; the man whom God curses is cursed, absolutely and for ever. (*J. B. Brown, B.A.*) How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob.—*The prosperity of the Church*:—With great admiration he beginneth to declare the future prosperity of that people, and doth it by six similitudes. 1. As the valleys are they stretched forth, or as the rivers say some, which coming from one head spread themselves into great broad waters, so this people having sprung from Jacob, one patriarch, hath spread into this multitude, and yet further shall spread into many more. 2. "As gardens by the river's side." Such gardens are watered so by the rivers as if the heat be never so great, yet they are not burned up. So shall this people in all adversities and dangers be preserved by the power and blessing of God till the coming of the Messiah, and overcome by no assaults of Satan and his instruments. 3. "As the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted." 4. "As the cedar trees beside the waters," which, growing to a great height, notably show how this people with their offspring should wonderfully grow with their virtue and famous acts, getting a great name in the world. 5. "The water droppeth out of his bucket"; that is, as such water floweth abroad, so shall this people abound with the water of heavenly doctrine and wisdom, and from them be spread to other nations plentifully, according to that "Out of Sion shall a law go, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." 6. "His seed shall be in many waters." As seed that is cast into a field well watered soon springeth and beareth fruit, so this people. These are the prophetic resemblances of this people Israel, which do still declare unto us the flourishing and happy state of God's Church, whatsoever worldly men conceive and think. The Church is the tabernacle of God, wherein He dwelleth, and familiarly with His chosen as with His domestics and household servants converseth, providing things necessary both for this life and that to come. The Church is that little river which spreadeth itself far and wide throughout the world. The Church is that well-watered garden, set with sweet

trees, casting forth the fragrant smell of life, of the knowledge of God and of virtue, whereof Solomon in his Canticles: "My sister, my spouse, is a garden enclosed, as a spring shut up, and a fountain sealed up." The Church is that shadow that yieldeth comfortable cooling, in the sense and feeling of God's wrath to sin. It is that cedar planted by the water-side, and growing so high, whereof the prophet in the Psalm: "The righteous shall flourish like a palm-tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Such as be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in their age; they shall be fat and flourishing," &c. The Church is that bucket, containing doctrine of life, and dropping it out to the comfort of souls. Finally, that seed shall live again in the life to come, and for ever spring and flourish. (*Ep. Babington.*) *Balaam's third parable: the glory of the people of God:—*

I. THE PREPARATION OF THE PROPHET TO DECLARE THE DIVINE WILL. 1. Balaam renounces the search for auguries. 2. He beholds the encampment of Israel. 3. He is inspired by the Holy Spirit. 4. He hears Divine words and sees Divine visions. **II. THE DECLARATION BY THE PROPHET OF ISRAEL'S GLORY.** 1. Their beautiful appearance. (1) Beauty—(a) Of order.

(b) Of culture and fertility. (2) Fragrance. (3) Majesty. 2. Their prosperous condition. 3. Their exalted position. 4. Their conquering power. (1) Great strength. (2) Great conquests. (3) Great security. (4) Great influence. (*W. Jones.*)

*Balaam's third parable:—*Seen from the top of the rocks, everything about Israel is perfection. Had we been down in the valley, and looked into them from an earthly standpoint, we should have seen deformity enough. But from God's presence everything is changed. But mark the figures under which this beauty is described.

"As valleys are they spread forth." These are the valleys watered by the river; these are the people of God, made beautiful by the refreshing streams of living water which flow down from the throne of God. Not yet are they as watered "valleys," but as "gardens by the river's side." This is a richer description still. They are the garden of the Lord. They are the plants planted by the Father.

They have been taken out of the world—transplanted—and are now to "bring forth much fruit." The streams from "the river of God" find their way to the roots of their spiritual life; and thus they become fruitful. Jesus is the source of their life and their fruitfulness. And in all this we see growth—"as the valleys are they spread forth; as gardens by the river's side." The entire figure implies sanctification—growth in grace. There will always be three kinds of growth where the soul is really abiding in Jesus. There will be the outward growth as the "lily"—the life before men; the hidden growth as the "roots" of Lebanon—the life before God; and the relation toward men as the "branches spreading," the influence which they cast around. But the figure grows in richness: "as trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted." The aloe tree was highly valued on account of its fragrance, and it was the tree from which the incense was prepared.

Thus the believer abiding in Jesus is a "sweet savour" of Christ. The fragrance of that blessed One is diffused far and wide through him. He is beautiful with the beauty which the Lord puts upon him. His "scent is as the wine of Lebanon." And to what cause is all this fragrance due? To the "Lord's planting." There is one more step in advance in the spiritual life in this verse: "as cedar trees beside the waters." As the "lily" and "trees of Lebanon" in the passage in Hosea, so here. The growth of the believer is brought before us under the loftiness of the cedar tree, its luxuriance, and the durability of its wood. Now, having noticed what the people of God are as seen in Jesus, let us mark their testimony. "He shall pour the water out of his buckets." The people of God are personified, as a man carrying two pails overflowing with water. A "bucket" or "vessel" is empty. It can give nothing. It can only receive. The "buckets" are the "empty vessels" to be filled with "living water" by the Holy Ghost. Like the two pails on a man's shoulder which are filled to the brim, he cannot move a step without the water overflowing. So with the believer abiding in Jesus. He is the empty vessel filled by the Holy Ghost. He cannot move a step without making that influence felt. There will be a trail of living water in his path—a track of light in every step of the way. And oh, what empty places there are within us and around us! Within us—desires, affections, longings, hopes, aims, plans; without us—home, duties, efforts, a weeping Church, and a dying world. Oh, that these "buckets" were filled with the "living water"! Then would gladness be written as with a sunbeam on every brow, and sunshine light up every heart. "His seed shall be in many waters." This is the effect of the outpoured water from the buckets of the believer's soul. He is made a blessing on every side. "His king shall be higher than Agag,

and his kingdom shall be exalted." Christ the King of the Jews is to be "higher" than all the kings of this world; and Christ's kingdom "exalted" above all other kingdoms. All this glory is then traced to the first great act of redemption: "God brought him forth out of Egypt." Thus deliverance from Egypt and future glory are linked together. "He hath as it were the strength of the buffalo." Here is the power of God abiding with, and resting upon, those whom He has redeemed. Then follows, in connection with their redemption from Egypt, that final triumph and glory. "He shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows." This is the foretold destruction mentioned in the New Testament, which awaits all the enemies of the Lord at His coming. But in the meantime the attitude of the Church of Christ is one of expectation. Her attitude is not one of judgment yet, but one of grace. This is strikingly brought before us in the next clause; "he couched, he lay down as a lion." The "couching" of the lion is always the attitude of expectation—looking forward to the moment when he shall spring upon his prey. "Lying down" indicates rest. The believer now rests in Jesus, and awaits His return. In the meantime blessing is his portion—"blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee." And we notice how the blessing culminates here. The first was, "How shall I curse, or how shall I defy?" After it was, "He hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it." Lastly, it is "Blessed is he that blesseth thee." This last form in which Balaam expresses himself shows us God's estimate of His people Israel. "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye." (*F. Whitfield, M.A.*)

*Sermon at reopening of a church:—*I. LET US ATTEMPT TO JUSTIFY AND ELUCIDATE THIS SACRED EXCLAMATION. The language is proper. 1. On account of the author of their construction. 2. The beneficial effect of their institution. 3. The pleasantness of their unity. 4. The joys of their fellowships. 5. Their perpetuity, and the certainty of their increase. II. WHAT OUGHT TO BE THE EFFECTS PRODUCED UPON US BY SUCH A SURVEY OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD. We should—1. Cherish a spirit of gratitude for the establishment and increase of these tents of God. 2. Shun all that would impair, and diligently maintain all that would secure the blessing. (1) Guard against lukewarmness, as that which would deface the beauty of ordinances, and rob us of the advantages we might receive from their celebration. (2) Take care of holding the truth in unrighteousness. (3) Be cautious not to violate the true spirit of love. (4) Preserve the vigour of wholesome, salutary discipline; so that the testimony may be borne you from on high, "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience," &c. (5) Follow up all with importunate prayer. "Peace be within thy walls, &c. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem," &c. 3. Endeavour to increase the number of those who frequent the tabernacles, and dwell in the tents of Jacob. Imitate the tribes when ambulating in the wilderness. Remember that you are surrounded by those who have no hope. Tell them plainly that you are pilgrims and strangers. Inform them of the privileges you enjoy by the way; of the manna which drops by your door; of the streams which flow from the rock Christ; of the light which guides your feet; of the cloud which screens you from temptation; of the victories you obtain over your foes; of the prospect you have of passing through Jordan safely; and of the rich land of promise which you are shortly about to enter. Press on them not to linger. 4. Anticipate the time when your tents will be struck, and all the ransomed tribes assemble in the tabernacle above. These tents of the Israelites were valuable as they traversed the sands of Arabia; but they left them when they entered on the rest which their prophets had predicted, and their poets sung. And what are our temples? They are only preparatory for the enjoyments of the Canaan above. May it be your privilege to join the tribes of the redeemed as they go up to Zion with everlasting joy upon their heads! (*J. Clayton, M.A.*)

Ver. 9. Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee.—*God will be merciful to such as be merciful to the Church:—*God will bless those that do good to His people, they shall not lose their labour that favour the Church, but such as are enemies unto them shall find God an enemy unto them. We see how God blessed the house of Laban for Jacob's sake (Gen. xxx. 27); and the house of Potiphar for Joseph's sake (Gen. xxxix. 3). Rahab, the harlot, receiving the spies and preferring their life before her own life, was herself saved from the common destruction. The widow of Sarepta giving hospitality to Elijah, and offering him part of that poor pittance which was left her and her son in those days of drought, was with all her family miraculously sustained in the famine, continuing three

years and six months (1 Kings xvii. 10). The Shunamite receiving the prophet Elisha, making him a chamber, providing all necessities for him. She showed some mercy, but received more mercy; she ministered comfort to the prophet, but herself, received more comfort. 1. First, God will honour all those that honour Him, He will despise all those that despise Him. This is the gracious promise that is gone out of His own mouth, which He cannot but verify, for He is not as man that He should lie; He is not as the son of man that He should deceive. This is it which the Lord spake by the mouth and ministry of Samuel concerning Eli and his house (1 Sam. ii. 30). And, therefore, they shall prosper that love the Church (Psa. cxxii). 2. Secondly, God hath appointed it to be the end of our obedience; our mercy to others shall procure mercy upon ourselves. This the apostle setteth down (Rom. ii. 10). 3. Thirdly, mercy, a notable fruit of love received, kindleth the hearts, and inflameth the affections of God's people, both to praise God for them, and to pray unto God for them that have been helpful and serviceable to the Church. The uses follow—1. First, from hence we have the confirmation of another holy truth in our Christian religion, that merciful, liberal, and kind men, shall be surely blessed. 2. Secondly, it is our duty to love God's people, seeing such as favour them do fare the better for them. 3. Thirdly, hereby we are warned to exhort one another to this duty, and by all means to provoke one another to mercy, in regard of the great recompense of reward that is laid up for merciful men. 4. Lastly, this doctrine is both a great encouragement unto us in well doing and a great comfort in all adversities. (*W. Attersoll.*)

Vers. 10-19. Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam.—*Balaam and Balak*:—**I. THE CAUSE OF BALAK'S ANGER.** That Balaam had not fulfilled the terms of his contract (vers. 10, 11). 1. Consider the reason and nature of the contract. Urgency of case. Great reputation of Balaam. 2. Consider the position and reputation of Balaam. (1) He is called a prophet (2 Pet. ii. 16). (2) God held communication with him (chap. xxiii. 9, 12, 20, 31; xxiii. 4, 5). (3) He was also a warrior-chief (chap. xxxi. 8). (4) He was a man of high gifts of intellect and genius, besides having a knowledge of the true God. 3. Consider how Balaam had failed in his contract (chap. xxiii. 1-30; xxiv. 1-9). **II. BALAAM'S SELF-JUSTIFYING ANSWER** (vers. 12, 13). 1. Was it true? Yes (chap. xxii. 13-18). 2. If true, why did he leave home? He loved money (2 Pet. ii. 15). 3. If God commanded him to go (chap. xxii. 20), why was he blamed for going (chap. xxii. 22)? (1) God's permission was based upon Balaam's strong desire to go. God gave him up to his own lust. (2) God's displeasure arose from the fact that Balaam was so determined to go and do that which he was told he must not do. Sinners must not think that their sin is any the less odious because God permits it. **III. BALAAM'S PARABLE** (vers. 14-19). 1. The situation. (1) Behind him lay the vast expanse of desert extending to his native Assyria. (2) On his left the red mountains of Edom and Seir. (3) Immediately below him lay the vast encampment of Israel. (4) Beyond them, on the west of Jordan, rose the hills of Palestine—the promised land. 2. The parable. (1) The condition of the prophet when he had the vision (ver. 16). (2) The leading subject of the parable—the mighty and glorious King of Israel. (a) The prophet sees Him in person. (b) He is able to distinguish His nationality. (c) He sees Him as a mighty conqueror. (3) That this refers to Christ is clear to any one who accepts the testimony of God's Word. **Lessons:** 1. God intrusts superior talents to men who may abuse them. 2. One besetting sin may be enough to dim the most splendid abilities and destroy the most brilliant reputation. 3. Balaam's failure to curse Israel is a significant type of the fact that he whom God hath blessed can no man curse. (*D. C. Hughes, M.A.*) **Spake I not also to thy messengers.**—*Worldly profit should not withdraw us from Christian duties*:—Matters of profit must not carry us beyond our calling, we must not pursue them when we have no warrant to desire them. A notable example hereof we have in Gideon, he had a kingdom offered unto him; for the men of Israel said unto him, "Reign thou over us, both thou and thy son, and thy son's son." He saw no calling from God and therefore refused it, and betook himself to a private life, saying (Judges viii. 22, 23). The like we see in our Saviour Christ, He refused to be made a temporal king (John vi. 15). We see the disciples of Christ left all, and neglected the service of themselves, and the seeking of their own benefit for the service of God (Matt. xix. 27). Whereby we see that albeit profits be in time and place to be looked after, yet we must all look to have our warrant in seeking for them. The reasons remain to be considered, to enforce this truth, and to gain our

affections to the embracing of it. 1. For, first, by too much following the profits of this life, we may lose a greater profit. If we should win the world, and lose our souls; if we should catch the riches of this life, and crack the peace of a good conscience, it would prove in the end a small gain unto us. 2. Secondly, the things of this life serve only for a season. The hope that we have is this—we look for a kingdom. We cannot have a heaven in this life, and another in the life to come. The uses come now to be stood upon. 1. First, we see it is a dangerous bait to be in love with the world. 2. Secondly, we see that our own private respects are not the chief things that we must respect, but seek a sanctified use of the blessings of this life, and a warrant to our consciences for the right using of them. These blessings of God become curses unto us unless we use them lawfully. 3. Lastly, this doctrine serveth to reprove those that esteem earthly things above heavenly, and mind their profits more than their salvation. These invert the course of nature and turn all things upside down, they set the earth above the heavens, and thrust down the heavens beneath the earth. This is like that confusion and disorder which the wise man speaketh of (Eccles. x. 6, 7). (*W. Attersoll.*)

Vers. 17–19. **I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh.**—*Balaam's vision*.—As I read these words I seem to look on the scene described. What do I see? I see the top of a wild mountain range, and I see altars smoking with sacrifices. Hard by stands Balak, with many slaves bearing costly gifts, gold, and precious stones, and spices, and garments. A little apart is Balaam, that “strange mixture of a man.” And now, as he gazes from the high places of Baal, and the altars of idolatry, he sees far below Israel abiding in their tents. There are the banners of the different tribes waving in the wind; the eyes of Balaam are opened, and he recalls the past of Israel's history, and he foresees the future. And now, as we turn aside from this unwilling prophet who utters a blessing, in every word of which there was breathed a curse, what lessons are there for us of to-day. 1. First, we learn the awful danger of trifling with conscience, the whisper of the Holy Spirit within us. Balaam knew what was right, yet desired to do wrong. 2. We learn, too, the sin of trying to make a bargain, or compromise, with God. Hundreds of people are trying to do this, endeavouring to serve God a little, and the world a good deal. They profess to obey God, but only in the matters which they choose. 3. We learn, also, from the story of Balaam's sin, never to neglect a plain duty for the sake of earthly gain. (*H. J. Wilmoth-Buxton, M.A.*) *Two ways of seeing Christ*.—Commentators have differed as to the way of explaining the pronoun “him,” some referring it to Israel. We need scarcely say that we agree with those who refer to Him who is Jacob's star and sceptre. False as his heart was, the seer saw Him in the spirit of prophecy, and felt that a time would come when he would actually see Him. But the time when Jacob's Star would arise was not come, it was distant, and so he adds, “but not now; I shall behold Him, but not nigh.” This seems to be the obvious meaning of the words. But if you look at them in connection with Balaam's state of mind, do they not contain a deeper and more awful meaning? Are they not prophetic of himself, as well as of Christ?—of his own awful end, as well as of Israel's great destiny? “I shall see Him!” Yes, when He comes again; but does he express hope that he will share in the Redeemer's glory and Israel's blessedness? No, there is no word of hope, no expression of desire, as in the words of Job, “For I know that my Redeemer liveth,” &c. “My Redeemer!” says the afflicted saint, with an appropriating faith; “whom I shall see for myself,” he adds, in hallowed longing; but all that the “unrighteous” prophet could say was, “I shall behold Him, but not nigh.” In what spirit do we think of that day of which these men speak? All of us, without any exception, will see Christ. “Every eye shall see Him.” But how shall we see Him—nigh, or afar off? Like Job, or like Balaam? Has it been given us to say with the first, “My Redeemer—mine, for He died for me”? Or do we feel—must we feel, that we have no part in His salvation; and that when we see Him, it may be “afar off.” (*G. Wagner.*) *A Star out of Jacob.*—*Balaam's prophecy of Christ as Star and Sceptre*.—Balaam, moved by the Spirit, sets forth Jesus in this prophecy in a twofold character—as the Giver of light, and as exercising kingly power. I. First, AS THE GIVER OF LIGHT: “There shall come a Star out of Jacob.” We all know that the Redeemer is more than once compared in Scripture to the sun (Mal. iv. 2; Luke i. 78). It is not, perhaps, quite so easy to see why Christ is compared to a “star”; for as the stars shine with a borrowed light, they seem more suited to be illustrations of the followers of Jesus than of the

Saviour Himself. And so they are used in Rev. i. 20 of ministers: "The seven stars are the angels of the seven Churches"; and by St. Paul of all Christians (Phil. ii. 14). Applied to Christ, it may be to teach us how Jesus shines through all the long night of the Church's sorrows. The sun dissipates darkness; where it shines, darkness ceases. It is so with the rule of sin. Into whatever heart Christ shines, there the power of sin is broken. The star gives light without dissipating darkness. It guides the wanderer's feet. So Jesus gives light in the night of affliction. He does not altogether remove it, nor exempt His people from suffering. But they are not left in utter darkness. There is a star in the heavens above, so bright that it can penetrate the darkest cloud, and gladden with its light the loneliness of sorrow. But St. John teaches us something more about this star when he records the words of the glorified Redeemer, "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning Star" (Rev. xxii. 16). And why the morning star? The morning star is the last to disappear. It still continues to shine when the rays of the sun have overwhelmed every other light; and thus it is a beautiful emblem of Christ. Is Christ Jesus your Star, your morning Star? Is it to His light that you look? And if any earthborn cloud interrupts His light from your soul, do you look through the cloud, and wait, not impatiently, but earnestly, for its removal? Those false lights with which we encompass ourselves, the sparks of our own kindling, will certainly all go out, and great will be the consternation of those who will then be left in darkness. But if you are looking to Jesus, guided by His light, then your path will get brighter and brighter, until it ends in the perfect light of His presence, a height to which no cloud can rise. But there is one thing more that we must notice with regard to this Star. Balaam tells us the point from whence he saw it arise. "There shall come," he says, "a Star out of Jacob." This points us to the humanity of Jesus. All the brightness of the Godhead came to us through the humanity of Jesus. II. But let us pass on to the second part, THE KINGLY OFFICE OF OUR REDEEMER: "And a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel." It may be thought, perhaps, in consequence of the words that follow, "and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth," that this prophecy was fulfilled in the time of David, when the boundaries of Israel were so much enlarged, and their enemies overcome. But we ought to remember that just as the prophets and priests of Israel were types of Jesus as Prophet and Priest, so were its kings types of Him who was and is a King of kings. Jesus was a King in the days of His suffering on earth. It was under the direction of God's providence that Pilate, though he meant it not so, wrote the title, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." The sceptre was in His hand; but He did not then put forth His great power and reign. His kingly office was held for a time in abeyance. True it is that Christ does reign. He reigns in the hearts of His willing people, and over a reluctant world. But this is the time of His patience and long-suffering. The hour is not yet come for the full manifestation of His kingly office and power. Does He reign in our hearts, destroying and keeping under our spiritual enemies? III. But there is one point more in our text which we must not leave unnoticed, and that is, THE CONSEQUENCE OF THE COMING OF THE STAR, AND RISING OF THE SCEPTRE—A POWER GIVEN TO ISRAEL TO OVERCOME HIS ENEMIES. Those enemies are described, not generally, but very minutely. Moab is mentioned first, because, headed by Balak, the Moabites were then endeavouring to destroy Israel. The expression, "Smite the corners (or sides) of Moab," signifies an entire destruction, perpetrated along the whole compass of its dominions. The next expression, "The children of Sheth," has puzzled commentators. Some have taken it as a proper name, to designate one of Adam's sons; but it is impossible to extract any good meaning from it if so understood. The Hebrew word has, however, lately been shown to be the contracted form of another word which signifies "tumult"; and this is strongly confirmed by a reference to a remarkable prophecy of Jeremiah concerning Moab, in which we can scarcely fail to observe an allusion to this prophecy of Balaam (Jer. xlviii. 42). The enemies of Israel were called the children of tumult, because they were ever restless; restless in themselves, because they knew not Israel's God, and restless as neighbours, because they would give Israel no peace. Next to Moab, Edom is mentioned. Then follow predictions of judgments on Amalek, Israel's first enemy, on the Kenites, strong as they seemed to be in their mountain-passes, on Asshur and Eber; and so terrible did these judgments appear to the seer, that he could not help exclaiming, "Alas! who shall live when God doeth this?" But all these are but typical of the greater enemies with which we have to contend. The "sons of tumult" encompass us about. Satan, knowing that his time is short, is ever busy.

The world, so restless because it knows not Christ, pours in its influences upon us. The old man within us, though crucified, is ever struggling for victory. And under these influences our very relatives and friends may hinder us on our way, just as Edom did Israel. What must we do to overcome? We must fix our eye upon Jacob's Star, the bright morning Star. We must cling to the sceptre of Jesus. Remember that the enemies of God's people are already doomed to destruction. Yet a little while, and if you are Christ's, Satan will be bruised under your feet. The world will not attract or frighten you. The old man will not struggle and weary you. (*Ibid.*)

The Star of Jacob:—Our Lord, then, is compared to a star, and we shall have seven reasons to assign for this. I. He is called a star as THE SYMBOL OF GOVERNMENT. You will observe how evidently it is connected with a sceptre and with a conqueror. Jacob was to be blessed with a valiant leader who should become a triumphant sovereign. Very frequently in oriental literature their great men, and especially their great deliverers, are called stars. Behold, then, our Lord Jesus Christ as the Star of Jacob. He is the Captain of His people, the Leader of the Lord's hosts, the King in Jeshurun, God over all, glorious and blessed for ever! 1. We may say of Jesus in this respect that He has an authority which He has inherited by right. He made all things, and by Him all things consist. It is but just that He should rule over all things. 2. Our Lord as a star has an authority which He has valiantly won. Wherever Christ is King He has had a great and a stern fight for it. 3. This kingdom of Christ, wherever it is, is most beneficent. Wherever this star of government shines, its rays scatter blessing. Jesus is no tyrant. He rules not by oppression. The force He uses is the force of love. II. The star is THE IMAGE OF BRIGHTNESS. Our Lord Jesus Christ is brightness itself. The star is but a poor setting forth of His ineffable splendour. As Mediator, exalted on high, enjoying the reward of His pains, He is bright indeed. 1. Observe, that our Lord as a star is a bright particular star in the matter of holiness. In Him was no sin. 2. As a star, He shines also with the light of knowledge. Moses was, as it were, but a mist, but Christ is the Prophet of light. "The law was given by Moses"—a thing of types and shadows—"but grace and truth come by Jesus Christ." If any man be taught in the things of God, he must derive his light from the Star of Bethlehem. III. Thirdly, our Lord is compared to a star to bring out the fact that He is THE PATTERN OF CONSTANCY. Ten thousand changes have been wrought since the world began, but the stars have not changed. There they remain. So with our Lord Jesus. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. What the prophets and apostles saw in Him, we can see in Him, and what He was to them, that He is to us, and shall be to generations yet unborn. Hundreds of us may be looking at the same star at the same time without knowing it. There is a meeting-place for many eyes. We may be drifted, some of us, to Australia, or to Canada, or to the United States, or we may be sailing across the great deep, but we shall see the stars there. It is true that on the other side of the world we shall see another set of stars, but the stars themselves are always still the same. As far as we in this atmosphere are concerned, we shall look upon some star. So, wherever we may be, we look to the same Christ. Jesus Christ is still the same, the same to all His people, the same in all places, the same for ever and ever. Well, therefore, may He be compared to those bright stars that shine now as they did of old and change not. IV. In the fourth place, we may trace this comparison of our Lord to a star as THE FOUNTAIN OF INFLUENCE. The old astrologers used to believe very strongly in the influence of the stars upon men's minds. But whether there be an influence in the stars or not, as touching this world, I know there is great influence in Christ Jesus. He is the fountain of all holy influences among the sons of men. Where this star shines upon the graves of men who are dead in sin they begin to live. Where the beam of this star shines upon poor imprisoned spirits, their chains drop off, the captive leaps to lose his chains. When this star shines upon the backslider, he begins to mend his ways, and to follow, like the eastern sages, its light till he finds his Saviour once more. V. In the fifth place, the Lord Jesus Christ may be compared to a star as a SOURCE OF GUIDANCE. There are some of the stars that are extremely useful to sailors. I scarcely know how else the great wide sea would be navigated, especially if it were not for the Polar Star. Jesus is the Polar Star to us. VI. Our Lord is compared to a star, surely, as THE OBJECT OF WONDER. We used to think when we were little ones that the stars were holes pricked in the skies, through which the light of heaven shone, or that they were little pieces of gold-dust that God had strewn about. We do not think so now; we understand that they are much greater than they look to be. So,

when we were carnal, and did not know King Jesus, we esteemed Him to be very much like anybody else, but now we begin to know Him, we find out that He is much greater, infinitely greater than we thought He was. And as we grow in grace, we find Him to be more glorious still. VII. Our Lord is compared to a star, as He is THE HERALD OF GLORY. The bright and morning star foretells that the sun is on its way to gladden the earth with its light. Wherever Jesus comes He is a great prophet of good. Let Him come into a heart, and, as soon as He appears, you may rest assured that there is a life of eternity and joy to come. Let Jesus Christ come into a family, and what changes He makes there. Let Him be preached with power in any town or city, and what a herald of good things He is there. To the whole world Christ has proclaimed glad tidings. His coming has been fraught with benedictions to the sons of men. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Balaam's prophecy*:—I. CHRIST'S PREDICTED HUMAN ANCESTRY. "Out of Jacob," &c. He was the "Lord from heaven"; but He came through the lowly door of human birth. 1. His ancestry was chosen by God. That there was a fitness we cannot doubt; what it consisted in we do not know. 2. Its destinies were guided by God with a view to this great consummation. This explains many a dark passage in Israel's history. So when we can view God's leading of us from the result, all will be clear. 3. It was a lowly ancestry. Contrast with the great ancient powers. 4. It was by no means a pure and worthy ancestry. The clean came out of an unclean. Endless hope for man in that. II. THE TWOFOLD REPRESENTATION OF CHRIST'S REIGN. 1. A Star. In its guidance. (1) Universal and impartial. For all under the heavens. (2) Abiding. No earthly power or malice can quench its light. (3) Leads in the darkness. Burns the brighter the greater the darkness. (4) Unobtrusive. You must watch and follow. 2. A Sceptre. (1) Strong to protect His friends. (2) Powerful to crush His foes. (*Clerical World.*) *The Star of Jacob and the Sceptre of Israel*:—I. THE STAR OF JACOB OR ISRAEL. 1. Christ is a Star to give Divine light and guidance to the soul. 2. Christ is a Star of glory for His Church, and of conquest over all His foes. II. CHRIST IS THE SCEPTRE OF ISRAEL, OR OF THE CHURCH OF GOD. The sceptre is the emblem in all realms and ages of royal authority. Now Christ holds the sceptre of royal power in two ways. 1. As the Divine Lawgiver and Ruler of His Church for government. 2. For victory and eternal glory. (*J. G. Angley, M.A.*) *Balaam and the Star of Jacob*:—I. THE DELIVERER OF THIS PROPHECY. II. THE PERSON FORETOLD IN THIS PROPHECY. 1. A star may be conceived an apt emblem of Jesus, from the loftiness and dignity of its position. Lofty as is the sphere of the common star, infinitely loftier is the mediatorial range of the circuit of Christ, the Star of Bethlehem. In His course as a Saviour, He completely overtops with His excellency all length, and breadth, and depth, and height—all time—all eternity. 2. A star, also, is an apt emblem of Jesus, inasmuch as it helps to relieve the monotonous aspect of the gloom of night with its brilliant presence. How undefined would be the face of night without the stars! It is the constant twinklings that are emitted from the various groups of stars above our heads which convert the dulness of night into positive cheerfulness. And is not Jesus the Star that gilds the dark night of affliction with the blessings of His spiritual presence? 3. How wonderful is it that He generally reserves the disclosure of His unsearchable ways to His chosen until the darkest hour of the night of tribulation! But Jesus, also, is aptly represented under the figure of a star, as being set forth to the world at large as a sign from heaven. To some He shines far off, as the star of better days to come; to more as the star of ill omen and wrath from on high to them that are disobedient and care not for the truth. III. THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROPHECY. (*R. Jones, B.A.*) *Balaam's vision*:—It is evident that the star and the sceptre are to be taken as emblems or types of some prince or warrior; for it is a living form which Balaam first represents himself as beholding, though he immediately proceeds to describe the being under images drawn from the inanimate creation. And that the star and sceptre did but figure some illustrious person is yet more clear from what instantly follows, seeing that the deeds of a conqueror are ascribed to him by the prophet—"and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth." The successes of this potentate are then more fully stated—"And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies." And the prophecy, so far as we are now to consider it, is shut up in the declaration, that the warrior figured by the star and the sceptre should not be alone in his conflict, but should be associated with the people from whom he was to arise, "Israel shall do valiantly." And who, think ye, is this leader or prince to represent? The first opinion is, that it was David whom Balaam foresaw and foretold; the second,

that it was Christ. And these opinions may both be correct. It is very common for prophecies to have a double fulfilment. The first when they are taken in a somewhat restricted sense; the second when they are taken in their largest sense. And this is peculiarly the case when an individual is himself the type of a more illustrious; and when therefore it may naturally be expected that his actions serve also as predictions of those of his antitype. Now it is not necessary that we should show you that a king such as David might be fitly represented under the emblem of a star and a sceptre. This at least will be immediately admitted in regard of the sceptre; for the sceptre being that which a king holds and sways, suggests necessarily the idea of a royal ruler or potentate. And if we cannot affirm quite the same of the star, we know that, in the imagery of Scripture, stars are put for the leading men of a country—those most conspicuous in the political firmament: so that when great convulsions are to be delineated—those agitations of society which confound all orders and ranks—it is by such emblems as that of the stars falling from the heavens that the overthrow of princes and grandees was commonly represented. We turn then to the things said to be done by the being thus figuratively described; and in these we may certainly recognise the actions of David. It is affirmed of the predicted king that he shall “smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth”; Sheth (according to the best interpreters) having been the name of a great Moabitish prince. This affirmation (if Moab be literally understood) requires that the ruler of Israel should lay waste the country in which Balaam then stood; and so far the prediction was undoubtedly accomplished by David. For you read in the Second Book of Samuel—“David smote Moab, and he measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive: and so the Moabites became David’s servants, and brought gifts.” It is next said “Edom shall be a possession”; and you find it stated of David in the very chapter from which we have just quoted, “David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus; and the Syrians became servants.” As to what follows—“Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies”—it seems to be only a repetition of the former clause; for Seir was the name given to some parts of the country of the Edomites. So that the prophecy—a prophecy verified by the historical facts already adduced, is that David’s occupation of the land would be so complete that he should have possession of its fastnesses and heights. We need scarcely add that the remaining words of the text, “Israel shall do valiantly,” apply thoroughly to the people over whom David ruled; for the nation became eminently warlike under so illustrious a leader, and distinguished itself by courage in the field. And thus we may fairly say that if David were represented by the star and the sceptre, his registered actions and achievements correspond with sufficient accuracy to the prophetic delineation. But we doubt whether this accomplishment of the prophecy can seem to any of you commensurate with the grandeur of the diction with which it is conveyed. We thus bring you to the most important part of our subject. We are to apply the prophecy to Christ, and examine whether there be not a special fitness in the emblems of the star and the sceptre, when considered as designating the Redeemer; and whether the smiting of Moab and Edom do not aptly represent His victories and His triumphs. Indeed, so usual was it to associate the promised Christ with a star, or to take the star as His emblem, that we read of an impostor in the days of the emperor Adrian, wishing to pass himself off for the Messiah, assumed a title which signifies The Son of the Star; meaning thereby to announce himself as the star which Balaam had seen afar off. But admitting that the emblem of the star is employed in designating Christ, is there any special appropriateness in such an emblem? We reply at once that everything which has to do with light may fitly be taken as an image of Christ. There is nothing which so fitly represents the moral condition of the world when Christ appeared on earth as darkness. His office cannot be better represented than when He is exhibited under figures derived from the nature and the agency of light. But yet, why describe Him as a star, which does little towards irradiating a benighted creation? Why not rather take the sun as His emblem? He will be a sun to His Church throughout the heavenly states: but He is only as a star during the existing dispensation. And may not this, indeed, be most truly affirmed of a state in which at best “we see through a glass darkly,” and can “know but in part”? The night is yet upon us, though that night may be far spent; but it is no longer the starless night which it was ere the Redeemer brought life and immortality to light by His gospel. A star—a morning star has occupied our horizon, and the tempest-tossed barque, in danger of everlasting ship-

wreck, may steer itself by the light of that star to the haven where it would be, and where there is to be no more night, though no more sun. Christianity, as set up in the world, is but in its twilight. The night is still unbroken over a vast portion of our globe; and even where revelation has been received, we must rather speak of streaks like those on the eastern sky, whose gold and purple prophesy of morning, than those rich full lustrous which flood creation when the sun has reached the zenith. On every account, therefore, is our Redeemer fitly emblemed by the figure which He applied to Himself—the emblem of the bright and morning star. And surely we need not say much to prove to you that the emblem of the sceptre is equally appropriate. You know that in Christ are combined the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. But admitting the appropriateness of the emblems thus given to Christ, we have yet to examine whether the predicted actions were such as to be ascribed to the Redeemer. We have already shown you that if Moab and Edom are to be literally taken—that if they designate countries anciently so called—there are recorded events in the annals of the Jews which may be fairly considered as having accomplished the prediction. Now this is, of course, upon the supposition that the star and the sceptre represent David or some other Jewish prince, and will not hold when Christ is regarded as the subject of the prophecy. We need not say that Christ never laid waste the literal Moab and Edom; and we may add that there is nothing in Scripture to lead us to suppose that the countries formerly so called are hereafter to be specially visited by His vengeance. But you cannot be ignorant that it is common in the Bible to take a name which has belonged to some great foe of God, and to use it of others whose wickedness is their only connection with the parties originally so called. Edom and Moab are the names which prophecy gives to the enemies of the Church, who are to perish beneath the judgments with which that sun shall be saturated, when every baser light is to be lost in the star, and every other empire in that of the sceptre. And, therefore, in predicting the desolation of Moab and Edom, Balaam may be regarded as predicting the final overthrow of all the power of anti-christ, that a clear scene may be swept for the erection of the kingdom of Christ and His saints. The sign of the Son of Man is yet to be seen in the heavens, where it was beheld by Balaam, from the summit of Peor. I know not what that sign shall be; perhaps again the star—fearful meteor!—like that which hung over the fated Jerusalem, boding its destruction; perhaps again the sceptre—brilliant constellation!—burning with majesty and betokening the extinction of all meaner royalty; perhaps the Cross, as it appeared to the Roman—aye, when he was taught to know the God of battles, and to place Christianity upon the throne of the Cæsars. But whatever the sign, the Being whose emblazonry it exhibits, shall come to deal out a long-delayed vengeance on tribes that have refused to walk in His light and submit to His rule. Now it is to be observed that though we have thus referred the close of the prediction to the close of the existing dispensation, there has been from the first and there still is a partial accomplishment of all that Balaam announced. There is evidently a great mixture in the prophecy. It is a prophecy of illumination, of dominion, of destruction, and all these are to be traced ever since Christ revealed Himself to man. There have been always those in whose hearts the day star has risen—always those who have yielded themselves as willing subjects to the Mediator—always the Moabite and the Edomite who have defied His authority, or sunk beneath His vengeance. So that however the grand fulfilment is yet to be expected in the complete triumph of Christianity and the overthrow of all the foes of the Church, enough is continually occurring to prove that the prediction sketched the whole period of the present dispensation. Throughout this whole period the words have been fulfilled, “Israel shall do valiantly.” Israel has borne up bravely against incessant assault, and supported from on high has been successful in withstanding the armies of the aliens. (*H. Melville, B.D.*) A new star:—Professor Henry, of Washington, discovered a new star, and the tidings sped by submarine telegraph, and all the observatories of Europe are watching for that new star. Oh, hearer, looking out through the darkness of thy soul to-night, canst thou see a bright light beaming on thee? “Where?” you say, “where? how can I find it?” Look along by the line of the Cross of the Son of God. Do you not see it trembling with all tenderness and beaming with all hope? It is the Star of Bethlehem. (*T. de Witt Talmage.*) Variety of representation of God:—The Bible sets us an example of fashioning for ourselves a personal God to suit our need. When I find Paul using figures to represent to himself God, as his wants required Him, I know that I may do the same thing. When I want love, I may make God my tender and loving father or sister, or mother. When I want

pity, I may make Him a Being of unfailing and boundless pity. When I want courage, He is my lion; when I want light and cheer, He is my bright and morning star—my God alert, my sun, my bread, my wine. We may imagine Him everything that is to us good and beautiful, tender and true, and know that we are not cheating ourselves by vain fancies, but have only touched the extreme outer edge of the ever-blessed reality. There may be dangers in this freedom and variety of our representation of our God; but there are dangers in all forms of our thought of Him, and in none half so much as in having no realisation of Him at all, in considering Him an abstraction of all the *omnis*. Thinking of Him thus, none can ever love Him, or walk with Him. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Seeing the star*:—This one thing I have noticed in everybody—the moment they come to a clear apprehension of the love of Christ, they turn right about upon the minister, or upon the Christians who have been labouring, perhaps for years, to bring them to that very point, and say, “Why didn’t you tell us this before?” Why, it’s what we’ve been always telling them. I think that trying to point a man to the love of Jesus is like trying to show one a star that has just come out, the only star in the whole cloudy sky. “I can see no star, says the man.” “Where is it?” “Why, there; don’t you see?” But the man shakes his head; he can see nothing. But by and by, after long looking, he catches sight of the star; and now he can see nothing else for gazing at it. He wonders that he had not seen it before. Just so it is with the soul that is gazing after the Star of Bethlehem. Nothing in the world seems so hidden, so complex, so perplexing, as this thing, until it is once seen by the heart, and then, oh, there never was anything that ever was thought of that is so clear, so simple, so transcendently glorious! And men marvel that the whole world does not see and feel as they do. (*Ibid.*) *Death the crown of life*:—Our text may be considered either as a plaint, a sigh, or a song—a dirge winding to a march. There are, in reality, three questions interlinked in this passage. It is a question of studious curiosity. What kind of a race will then inhabit the earth? Men are naturally inquisitive to know who are to be their successors. Why not? They are to be the heirs in turn of our heritage; the tenants who are to move in as we move out; to enjoy our repairs, and to do, in turn, their own repairing for those who shall follow them. Who are they? The question deepens into a sigh. Here we go! just as we begin to take on the meaning of things about us; scarce sooner found than lost. But what of that which is to transpire long after all these are past? Some one will tread the path that I am treading! Some one will saunter in the grove where I now linger! Some one will loiter to enjoy the landscape which now feeds me with its soft beauty! Some one will scent the fragrance of these laughing flowers! Some one will be soothed and hushed by the melody of the rippling stream! Some one will look beseechingly up into the face of the twinkling stars! Some one will cry out with unutterable longing, as *we* now cry, “Alas! who shall live when God doeth this?” We are baffled at the grave. We put our eyes close to the bars, but we cannot see. Death is the crown of life; and yet it is not the triumph of man over time, but of time over man. We leave the world behind us. Do lasting slumbers hold us? Is there no more of us when we are gone? When the reduplicated forces of the earth shall be put under command; when man shall sit in plumed victory over the opposing energies of nature; when the sword shall be beaten into a ploughshare, and the spear into a pruning-hook; when old hoary tyrannies and rusty wrongs shall be entombed for ever; when health shall mantle the cheek, and happiness shall festoon the fireside; when man shall keep faith with his fellow-man, and worship and adore his Maker—shall I live then? The thought gladdens, but it maddens as well. The scepticism that would console me with the thought that death is but a momentary pang; that I shall sleep in death’s dateless night; that all these struggles shall have come to their rest; ah! this scepticism is but a miserable comforter after all. Shall I be shut out from my share in history? shut out from my right to know? It is voiced in another shape: “If a man die, shall he live again?” God has provided a way by which His people may be released, and yet view this earth in all its perfected beauty and glory. Only the wisdom of God could compass this. The resurrection solves this mighty problem. All who labour shall see the reward of their labour. The sower shall be partaker of the fruit. Every journeyman who worked wearily upon the temple, shall be present when the topstone is lifted to its place. Fall in, and catch up the anthem to the King of kings! Fall in, and live for ever. Follow Christ, and shout victory. Presently time shall have halted from its confused scramble, and God’s finished workmanship shall have been taken from the loom, and the tapestry shall be revealed in all its beauty and

perfection—the pattern will be complete. *Then shall we learn that when we die we do not die out; that death is not death; that to die is not to die, but to blossom into life.* (*H. S. Carpenter, D.D.*)

Ver. 25. Balaam rose up, and went, and returned to his place: and Balak also went his way.—*The parting of Balaam and Balak: the separations of life:—* I. BALAAM AND BALAK PARTED, HAVING UTTERLY FAILED IN THEIR DESIGNS. II. THEY PARTED WITH CHARACTERS CONSIDERABLY MODIFIED BY THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH EACH OTHER. III. THEY PARTED, BUT NOT FOR EVER. Those who have been associated in this present life will meet again in the great hereafter. Tempter and tempted, oppressor and oppressed, companions in evil designs and companions in noble enterprises—all will meet again. (*W. Jones.*) *The desires of evil men against the Church come to nothing:—* God disappointeth the policies of the ungodly against the Church; so that how cunningly soever they are contrived, He bloweth them away as with the wind, and He melteth them as wax with the fire. Many rest in vain hope, and put confidence in deceitful things. The Egyptians had a purpose to kill all the males of the Israelites, but see how wide they shot, and how far they missed (*Exod. i. 12*). The enemies of Christ say in the pride of their hearts, “Let us break their bands, and cast their cords from us; yet He that sitteth in the heaven laugheth them to scorn, and giveth to His Son the heathen for a possession” (*Psa. ii. 3*). Hereunto cometh the saying of the prophet (*Psa. vii. 14*). When Christ had preached the gospel at Nazareth, they were filled with such wrath against Him that they rose up and thrust Him out of the city, and led Him even unto the top of the hill, whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong; but He passed through the midst of them and went His way (*Luke iv. 30*). So we read in the Acts of the Apostles that certain Jews made an assembly, and bound themselves with a curse, saying, “That they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul” (*Acts xxiii. 22*). But they were disappointed, and their purpose, though closely contrived, was utterly disannulled. The reasons will make this truth more apparent. 1. If we consider this essential property of God that He is full of justice, He will reward as our works are. If we rest in vain and wicked practices He will not hold His peace, but throw down that which we build up, and He will disappoint that which we hope for. 2. The expectation of the wicked is vanity, because they can give no comfort or assurance. The uses are next to be considered, as they arise from this doctrine. 1. We may conclude from hence the unhappy estate of them that have only eyes of flesh, to rest on things which they see with their fleshly eyes. If we regard and receive only present blessings, they are of small moment. If, then, we wait on lying vanities and forsake God, our strength and salvation, we are unhappy and most miserable. 2. We learn that no wisdom, be it never so deep; no understanding, be it never so politic; no counsel, be it never so prudent; no subtilty, be it never so hidden, shall overthrow the purpose of God, or prevail against His truth, or hinder the execution of His will. For His infinite wisdom is able to overmatch all the wisdom that is in the creatures, and to prevent whatsoever devices they have set abroad. 3. Let us not rely on vain things, for then all our expectations shall be in vain. Who is so simple, that to stay him up from danger would rest on the web of a spider, or the staff of a reed, or the strength of a rush? All the devices of men, the power of princes, the courage of horses, the help of creatures, are as a broken weapon to defend us, and unserviceable to deliver us. This the prophet teacheth us (*Psa. cxlvi. 3–5*). 4. When we see the enemies conspire against the Church, let us, from this consideration of the vain confidence of the wicked, take occasion to comfort ourselves and to cheer up our hearts; all their expectation shall turn into smoke. Let them gather themselves together, and take crafty counsel one with another; He that ruleth in heaven shall scorn at their inventions, and frustrate them of their mischievous purposes. 5. Seeing all evil inventions and devices of the devil are disappointed, let us not stand in fear of any attempts made against us by his instruments. The enemies of the Church had hired a sorcerer and conjurer to waste and weaken them, yet we see his enchantments are defeated and come to nothing. (*W. Attersoll.*)

CHAPTER XXV.

VERS. 1-9. **The people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.**—*The sin of Israel at Shittim, and the judgment of God*.—I. THE SIN OF THE ISRAELITES AT SHITTIM. 1. The sin itself. (1) Spiritual fornication, or idolatry (Hos. ii.). (2) Physical fornication. 2. The origin of their sin (chap. xxxi. 16; Rev. ii. 14). 3. The instruments of their sin: Moab and Midian. 4. The occasion of their sin. (1) Their abode at Shittim. They were in the neighbourhood of sinful associations and corrupting influences. "Near a fire, a serpent, and a wicked woman, no man can long be in safety." (2) Their lack of occupation. Idleness leads to vice and mischief. II. THE JUDGMENT OF GOD UPON THE ISRAELITES ON ACCOUNT OF THEIR SIN. 1. The judgment inflicted immediately by God. In some form or other punishment ever follows closely upon the heels of sin. 2. The judgment inflicted by Moses and the judges by the command of God. (1) Its nature: Death. (2) Its publicity. (3) Its executioners. Lessons: 1. The secret of the security of the people of God: faithfulness. 2. The danger of those temptations which appeal to our self-indulgence or love of pleasure. 3. The terribleness of the Divine anger. 4. The solicitude with which we should guard against arousing this anger towards us. Sin calls it forth, therefore shun sin. 5. The earnestness with which we should seek the mercy and the protection of God. (*W. Jones.*) *Evil men proceed by degrees from worse to worse*.—In these words is offered unto us an example, expressing the nature of sin where once it is entertained. For behold here how they grow in sin. At the first, they departed out of the host of Israel and went to the people of Moab and Midian, with whom they coupled themselves; so that albeit they sinned, yet they had some shame of sin, and made some conscience of committing it openly amongst their brethren. But they proceed by little and little, from step to step, till they are ashamed of nothing. Therefore in the example of one man, here set before our eyes, Moses declares to what shamelessness they were come. For this man (who is afterward named), as if he had been absolute in power, as he was indeed resolute in will and dissolute in his whole life, brought his whorish woman in the sight of God, in the sight of Moses, in the sight of the congregation, and in the sight of the tabernacle, to show that he had filled up the measure of his sin. 1. The nature of sin is to draw all such as delight in it from one evil to another, until in the end they become most corrupt and abominable. 2. The wrath of God falleth upon such as make no conscience to fall into lesser sins, He giveth them over to a reprobate sense, and to hardness of heart. 3. Sin is fitly resembled to the fretting of a canker, and to the uncleanness of a leprosy, both which go forward until the whole body be infected and every member endangered. Now let us handle the uses. 1. Consider from hence how dangerous it is to give entertainment unto sin at the beginning, which groweth to more perfection every day; we cannot stop this stream when we will, it goeth beyond the strength of our nature. 2. Seeing evil men wax worse and worse, we may conclude that their judgment sleepeth not, but is increased as their sin; yea, so it is not far off, but lieth at the doors. 3. Seeing men giving themselves over to sin, it is our duty to resist the beginnings, to prevent the breach, and stop the first course of it. It is as a serpent that must be trod on in the egg. Let us take heed that sin grow not into a custom and get an habit. (*W. Attersoll.*) *Sin deprives us of God's protection*.—We have heard before that albeit that Balak and Balaam intended by their sorceries to curse the people of God, yet they could by no means do them hurt; they were guarded by the protection of God as with a sure watch. But so soon as they forsook the living God, and fell a whoring with the daughters of Moab and Midian, by and by God departeth from them, and His heavy judgments break in upon them. The force of sorcery could not hurt them, but the strength of sin doth weaken them. Hereby we learn that sin depriveth us of God's protection, and layeth us open to the fierceness of His wrath, and to the fury of our enemies. The reasons being considered will make the doctrine more evident. 1. Sin maketh us execrable to the Lord and abominable in His sight. If, then, sin makes us to be had in execration it is no marvel if we be left destitute of God's protection. 2. God departeth from them that fall from Him; they forsake Him, and therefore He forsaketh them. So, then, our lying in sin doth drive the Lord from us, that He will have no more fellowship with us to do us any good. We are now to set down the uses of this doctrine. 1. This teacheth us to acknow-

ledge that all judgments which fall upon us are righteous. God chastiseth us often, but always justly, never unjustly. 2. Seeing sin layeth us open to reproaches of enemies and to the judgments of God, as appeareth in this great plague upon the people, this sheweth that we must not go about to hide our sin from God through hypocrisy. For all things are naked and open to His eyes, with whom we have to do; so that we must learn to confess them before His presence. 3. This serveth as a notable advantage for the servants of God when they have any dealings against wicked men; we have encouragement from hence that we shall assuredly prevail against them, because we have to do with weak men that are out of God's protection. (*Ibid.*) *God's abhorrence of impurity*:—The Lord must have regard to two things in His own people—personal purity, and uncorrupted worship. In the very nature of things it would be quite impossible to preserve purity of principle, clearness of understanding, and spirituality of affection, with corruption of life. It is a delusion of the worst kind, a master-device of Satan, the perfection of sin's deceitfulness, and a perversion of all truth, justice, and grace, when men, in the retired indulgence of lusts within, or in open commission of crime, sit down tranquil under the defence of mercy, and fancy themselves with such interest in the robe of Christ's perfection and beauty, that no spot or fault is in them. A sinner may come to Christ under every sense of imperfection, pollution, and vileness, and through faith in His mediation, may participate with appropriating joy and a well-founded confidence in all the interests of His atoning blood and justifying righteousness; nevertheless, he can never find anything in the nature and influence of evangelical truth but what has the most direct tendency and design to deliver from the power as well as to save from the desert of sin. To a gracious heart sin proves a plague and constant grief, and the cause, while it exists, of a never-ending strife. (*W. Seaton.*) *The valley of sensuality*:—In Java is a valley which is called the Valley of Poison. It is an object of veritable terror to the natives. In this renowned valley the soil is said to be covered with skeletons and carcasses of tigers, of goats, and of stags, of birds, and even with human bones; for asphyxia or suffocation, it seems, strikes all living things which venture into this desolate place. It illustrates the valley of sensuality, the most horrible creation of social life. Few men who enter into its depths survive long; for it is strewn with dead reputations and the mangled remains of creatures who were once happy. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 10-13. Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned My wrath away . . . because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.—*Godly zeal*:—We can lay no claim to saintship without zeal. When wickedness increases, then zeal must be bold and daring. I. THE SOURCE OF GODLY ZEAL. The indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Grace in the heart must break forth. II. GODLY ZEAL HAS ITS SEAT IN THE HEART. III. MARK THE OBJECT OF HOLY ZEAL. Good works. It is the fervour of heavenly benevolence. IV. TRUE ZEAL IS BLENDED WITH KNOWLEDGE. To enlighten ourselves, we must have light ourselves. V. ZEAL IS FORGETFUL OF SELF. (*The Study.*) *The zeal of Phinehas*:—Phinehas appears as a rainbow on the bosom of a storm. He is as a flower on a wild heath, a fertile spot in a parched desert, pure ore in a rude quarry, a fragrant rose upon a thorny hedge, faithful among faithless. 1. "He was zealous for his God." He could not fold his arms and see God's law insulted, His rule defied, His will despised, His majesty and empire scorned. The servant's heart blazed in one blaze of godly indignation. He must be up to vindicate his Lord. His fervent love, his bold resolve, fear nothing in a righteous cause. 2. Mark, next, the zeal of Phinehas is sound-minded. It is not as a courser without rein, a torrent unembanked, a hurricane let loose. Its steps are set in order's path. It executes God's own will in God's own way. The mandate says, let the offenders die. He aims a death-blow, then, with obedient hand. The zeal, which heaven kindles, is always a submissive grace. 3. This zeal wrought wonders. It seemed to open heaven's gates for blessing to rush forth. God testifies, "He hath turned My wrath away from the children of Israel." He hath made atonement for them. My name is rescued from dishonour. The haughty sinner is laid low. Therefore I can restrain My vengeance. Men see that sin is not unpunished; mercy may now fly righteously to heal. Zeal is indeed a wonder-working grace. Who can conceive what countries, districts, cities, families, and men, have sprung to life, because zeal prayed? 4. Next mark how heavenly smiles beam on the zeal of Phinehas. Honour decks those who honour God. The priesthood shall be his. This lesson ends not here. Phinehas for ever stands a noble type. Yes,

Christ is here. In Phinehas we see Christ's heart, and zeal, and work, and mightily constraining impulse. In Phinehas we see Christ crowned, too, with the priesthood's glory. (*Dean Lardner*.) *The circumstances which moved the zeal of Phinehas* :—I. THERE WAS THE ENORMITY OF THEIR SIN. It included false doctrine and sinful practices, between which there is a closer connection than is always recognised. II. THERE WAS THE CHARACTER OF THE INSTIGATOR TO THE SIN. Balaam, "a strange mixture of a man." III. THERE WAS THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SIN PREVAILED. Among all classes. IV. THERE WAS THE MISERY OCCASIONED BY THE SIN. To the guilty, to their connections, to the community. V. THERE WAS THE DISHONOUR DONE TO GOD. 1. We should be zealous in religion. 2. Our zeal in contending against the sins of others should begin in zeal in contending against our own. (*George Brooks*.) *The zealous spirit* :—In fact, a zealous spirit is essential to eminent success in anything. Perhaps there is the more need to insist upon this because enthusiasm is out of fashion. It is bad form nowadays to admire anything very warmly. To be strenuously in earnest is almost vulgar. Especially is this so in regard to religion. "Our Joe is a very good young man," said an old nurse the other day; "but he do go so mad on religion." That was the fly in the ointment—which spoilt all. Did not Pope say long ago, "The worst of madness is a saint run mad"? And he only put in terse and pithy speech what other people say more clumsily. 1. And yet how can one be a Christian without being an enthusiast? Indifferent, half-hearted Christians are not true Christians at all. "I would thou wert either cold or hot," says our Lord. Lukewarmness is his utter abhorrence. And the author of "Ecce Homo" cannot be said to exaggerate in his declaration that "Christianity is an enthusiasm, or it is nothing." 2. And what good work has ever been wrought without enthusiasm? Said a great preacher, "If you want to drive a pointed piece of iron through a thick board, the surest way is to heat your skewer. It is always easier to burn our way than to bore it." Only "a soul all flame" is likely to accomplish much in the teeth of the difficulties which beset every lofty enterprise. The great movements which have most widely blessed the world have been led by men of passionate earnestness and fervid zeal. It is not the cool, calculating votaries of prudence who have done the work. Was it not written of our Lord Himself, "The zeal of Thy house hath eaten me up"? (*G. Howard James*.) *The faithful bring a blessing upon their families* :—We have seen the zeal of Phinehas in executing judgment upon the evil-doers, which brought a grievous plague upon the people. His spirit was stirred within him, being first stirred by the Spirit of God, which moved him to take a spear, and to thrust through the adulterer and adulteress. Now we shall see the reward that was given unto him for that work which was acceptable unto God, and profitable unto His people. He hath a covenant of peace made with him, and the priesthood confirmed unto him and his posterity. God is so pleased with the obedience of His people that He will show mercy to such as belong to them. This is plentifully proved unto us in the Word of God. When God saw Noah righteous before Him in that corrupt age, He made all that belonged unto him partakers of a great deliverance, saying unto him, "Enter thou and all thine house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before Me in this age" (Gen. vii. 1). This appeareth in the person of Abraham, when God had called him out of his country, and from his kindred, and made a covenant with him to bless him (Gen. xii. 2, 3). This is oftentimes remembered unto us in the Acts of the Apostles. When God had opened the heart of Lydia that she attended unto the things which Paul delivered, "She was baptized and all her household" (Acts xvi. 15, 33). The reasons to enforce this doctrine are evident, if we consider either the person of God or the condition of the faithful. 1. God hath in great mercy and goodness promised to show favour not only to the faithful themselves, but to the seed of the faithful that fear Him (Exod. xx. 6; xxxiv. 6, 7). 2. As the mercy of God is great, so the faith of the godly is effectual for themselves and their children. This is the tenor of the covenant that God hath made with all the faithful. God will be our God, and the God of our seed after us (Gen. xvii. 7). For as a father that purchaseth house or land, giveth thereby an interest unto his son therein; so he that layeth hold on the promise which God hath made to all godly parents, doth convey it unto his children; so that albeit they want faith by reason of their years, yet they are made partakers of Christ, and ingrafted into His body. The uses remain to be handled. (1) We learn that the children of faithful parents have right to baptism, and are to receive the seal of the covenant. This the apostle teacheth (1 Cor. vii. 14). (2) We are taught on the other side that evil parents bring the curse of God into their houses, and upon their posterity. (3) It

is required of us to repent and believe the gospel, that so we may procure a blessing upon ourselves and our children. (*W. Attersoll.*)

CHAPTER XXVI.

VER. 2. **Take the sum of all the congregation.**—*Divine enumeration*:—God is a God of numbers. He is always numbering. He may number to find out who are present, but in numbering to find out who are present He soon comes to know who are absent. He knows the total number, but it is not enough for Him to know the totality; He must know whether David's place is empty, whether the younger son has gone from the father's house, whether one piece of silver out of ten has been lost, whether one sheep out of a hundred has gone astray. We are all of consequence to the Father, because He does not look upon us through the glory of His majesty, but through the solicitude of His fatherhood and His love. We need this kind of thought in human life: living would be weary work without it. This chapter reads very much like the other chapter in which the census was first taken. . . . The historic names are the same, but what a going-down in the detail! We must enter into this thought and follow its applications if we would be wise in history; generic names are permanent, but the detail of life is a panorama continually changing. It is so always and everywhere. The world has its great generic and permanent names, and it is not enough to know these and to recite them with thoughtless fluency. Who could not take the statistics of the world in general names? Then we should have the wise and the foolish, the rich and the poor, the faithful and the faithless, the good and the bad. That has been the record of life from the beginning; and yet that is too broadly-lined to be of any real service to us in the estimate of human prayers and human moral quality. What about the detailed numbers, the individual men, the particular households, the children in the crowd? It was in these under-lines that the great changes took place. The bold, leading names remained the same, but they stood up like monumental stones over graves in which thousands of men had been buried. So with regard to our own actions; we speak of them too frequently with generic vagueness; we are wanting in the persistent criticism that will never allow two threads of life to be intertangled, that must have them separated and specifically examined. God will have no roughness of judgment, no bold vagueness, no mere striking of averages; but heart-searching, weighing—not the action: any manufactured scales might weigh a deed. He will have the motive weighed, the invisible force, the subtle, ghostly movement that stirs the soul; not to be found out by human wisdom, but to be seized, detected, examined, estimated, and determined by the living Spirit of the living God. The sin of the individual does not destroy the election of the race. Israel is still here, but almost countless thousands of Israelites have sinned and gone to their doom. With all this individual criticism and specific numbering, do not imagine that it lies within the power of any man to stop the purpose or arrest the kingdom of God. There is a consolatory view of all human tumult and change, as well as a view that tries the faith and exhausts the patience of the saint. It is pitiful for any Christian man to talk about individual instances of lapse or faithlessness, as though they touched the infinite calm of the mind of God, and the infinite integrity of the covenant of Heaven. It is so in all other departments of life—why not so on the largest and noblest scale? The nation may be an honest nation, though a thousand felons may be under lock and key at the very moment when the declaration of the national honesty is made; the nation may be declared to be a healthy country, though ten thousand men be burning with fever at the very moment the declaration of health is made. So the Church of the living Christ, redeemed at an infinite cost, sealed by an infinite love, is still the Lamb's bride, destined for the heavenly city, though in many instances there may be defalcation, apostasy—yea, very treason against truth and good. Live in the larger thought; do not allow the mind to be distressed by individual instances. The kingdom is one, and, like the seamless robe, must be taken in its unity. Individuals must not trust to ancestral piety. Individual Israelites might have quoted the piety of many who had gone before; but that piety goes for nothing when the individual will is in rebellion against God. No man has any overplus of piety.

No man may bequeath his piety to his posterity. A man cannot bequeath his learning—how can he bequeath his holiness? (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The apparent insignificance and the real importance of human life*:—These uninteresting verses suggest—I. THE APPARENT INSIGNIFICANCE OF HUMAN LIFE. How dull are the details, and how wearisome the repetitions of this chapter! What a number of obscure names of unknown persons it contains! II. THE REAL IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN LIFE. This will appear if we consider that—1. Every man has his own individuality of being and circumstances. 2. Every man has his own possibilities. 3. Every man has his own influence. 4. Every man has his own accountability. 5. Every man is an object of deep interest to God. To Him nothing is mean, nothing unimportant. (*W. Jones.*) *The interesting hidden in the commonplace*:—I. HERE IS THE COMMONPLACE. II. HERE IS THE INTERESTING IN THE COMMONPLACE. If we look into this chapter carefully we shall discover certain words which are suggestive of deep and tender interests. “Sons” is a word of frequent occurrence, so also is the word “children”; we also read of “daughters” (ver. 33), and of a “daughter” (ver. 46). A profound human interest attaches to words like these. They imply other words of an interest equally deep and sacred; e.g., “father,” “mother.” The humblest, dullest, most commonplace life has its relations. The least regarded person in all the thousands of Israel was “somebody’s bairn.” We also read of “death” (ver. 19); most of the names which are here recorded belonged to men who were gathered to their fathers; from the time of the twelve sons of Jacob here mentioned to the time of this census in the plains of Moab, many thousands of Israelites had died, of all ranks and of all ages. Reflection upon these facts awakens a mournful interest in the mind. III. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE COMMONPLACE. Impatience of the ordinary and the prosaic is an evidence of an unsound judgment and an unhealthy moral life. 1. Most of life’s duties are commonplace. Yet how important it is that these duties be faithfully fulfilled! 2. The greater number of persons are commonplace. 3. The greater part of life is commonplace. Be it ours to give the charm of poetry to prosaic duties, by doing them heartily; and to ennoble our commonplace lives by living them faithfully and holily. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 9–11. *The earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up.*—*Solemn monitors against sin*:—Sin and infamy cling to families long after the actors have passed away. Parents ought to strive above all to leave to their children the heritage of a good name. Sin and infamy are long lived; as in the verse of our text, many years after the descendants are reminded of their ancestor’s crime. Their sin was to oppose Moses and God—using their influence as men of note to create a rebellion. God visited them for their sin—“And they became a sign” (see chap. xvi.). They became “symbols,” “beacons.” God made use of them to teach great lessons. Visitations like that have tongues; they speak to us from God. I. THE INSIDIOUS CHARACTER OF SIN. Sin grows upon us; never trifle with it; safety in the opposing it. As the moth, dazzled with the light, &c., ends in being scorched or burnt, so it ever is with those who trifle with sin and parley with temptation. II. THEY WARN US OF THE TERRIBLE EVIL AND DANGER OF SIN. Sin becomes our greatest curse; we have, indeed, nothing else to fear. III. THEY SHOW US WHAT A CURSE BAD MEN ARE TO THEIR FAMILIES AND OTHERS. If there is any manhood left in one, this thought must arrest his attention. IV. THEY SHOW US GOD’S DESIRE TO BENEFIT MAN. (*David Lloyd.*) *The victims of sin a warning to others*:—I. A WARNING AGAINST THE COMMISSION OF SIN. II. A WARNING AGAINST ASSOCIATION WITH SINNERS. III. A WARNING AGAINST TEMPTING OTHERS. (*Lay Preacher.*) *Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not.*—*Children that live*:—“Notwithstanding, the children of Korah died not.” May we not read it—that though the sire dies the progeny lives? There is a continuity of evil in the world. We only cut off the tops of iniquities, their deep roots we do not get at; we pass the machine over the sward, and cut off the green tops of things that are offensive to us; but the juicy root is struck many inches down into the earth, and our backs will hardly be turned, and the click of the iron have ceased, before those roots are asserting themselves in new and obvious growths. Iniquity is not to be shaved off the earth—ironed and mowed away like an obnoxious weed—it must be uprooted, torn right up by every thinnest, frailest fibre of its bad self, and then, having been torn out, left for the fire of the sun to deal with—the fire of mid-day is against it and will consume it. And thus only can growths of evil be eradicated and destroyed. It is an awful thing to live! You cannot tell where influence begins, how it operates, or how it ends. The boy sitting next you is partly yourself, and he cannot help it.

You cannot turn round and say, "You must look after yourself as I had to do." That is a fool's speech. You can never shake off the responsibility of having helped in known and unknown ways and degrees to make that boy what he is. Life is not a surface matter, a loose pebble lying on the road that men can take up and lay down again without any particular harm being done. When the boy drinks himself into madness, he may be but expressing the influences wrought within him by three generations. When the young man tells a lie, he may be surprised at his own audacity, and feel as if he were rather a tool and a victim than a person and a responsible agent—as if generations of liars were blackening his young lips with their falsehoods. When this youth is restive and will not go to the usual church, do not blame the modern spirit of scepticism and restlessness, but go sharply into the innermost places of your own heart, and see how far you have bolted the church doors against your son, or made a place which he would be ashamed to be seen in. Then there is a bright side to all this view. I can, now that I have got my rough reading done, turn this "notwithstanding" into a symbol of hope, a light of history; I can make high and inspiring uses of it. I will blot out the word, "Korah," and fill in other names, and then the moral lesson of the text will expand itself into gracious meanings, rise above us like a firmament crowded with innumerable and brilliant lights. In days long ago they killed the martyrs—notwithstanding, the children of the martyrs died not. There the light begins to come; there I hear music lifting up sweetest voice of testimony and hope. So, in all the ages, one generation passeth away and another generation cometh, and still Christ's following enlarges; on the whole, he sums up into higher figures year by year. Not that I care for census-religion, not that I would number people for the purpose of ascertaining Christ's position in the world. The kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation; is not a matter of census-reckoning or statistic-returns; it is a matter of spiritual quality, inner manhood, meaning and attitude of the soul; and amid all sin, struggle, doubt, difficulty, darkness, the kingdom moves. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The children of Korah*:—These sons of Korah were afterwards in their prosperity eminently serviceable to the Church, being employed by David as singers in the house of the Lord; hence many psalms are said to be for the sons of Korah; and perhaps they were made to bear his name so long after, rather than the name of any other of their ancestors, for warning to themselves, and as an instance of the power of God, which brought those choice fruits even out of that bitter root. The children of families that have been stigmatised, should endeavour by their eminent virtues to bear away the reproach of their fathers. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*)

Vers. 63-65. There was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.—*The certainty of the fulfilment of God's threatened judgments and promised mercies*:—I. We are here furnished with a CONFIRMATION OF THE FACT THAT GOD WILL FULFIL HIS THREATENINGS AGAINST SINNERS. 1. We may conceive them to have counted upon their numerical strength. This has often been appealed to as a security against the punishment of crime. Nor can it be denied that, according as iniquity abounds in a community, it is the more rarely visited with its merited penalty. It is found, in such circumstances, not to be convenient to institute inquiry; and vice, with the colouring which the spirit of the age may have given to it, assumes not unfrequently the name of virtue. But it is far otherwise with Him whose power, holiness, and justice are infinite. 2. It is not improbable that, as a ground of security against threatened judgment, the Israelites in the wilderness counted on their privileges. On this principle many a sinner reasons to his own destruction; forgetting that the higher his privileges, the greater the punishment they involve, if unimproved. The execution of the sentence of death upon the Israelites was the more solemn, because executed amidst the enjoyment of the means of grace. They died, the monuments of Divine wrath—while on every side they were surrounded with privileges. They died, in that camp, which was the camp of the living God. They died, within sight of the Lord's tabernacle, and of the ark of the Lord's covenant. They died, while the manna from heaven was falling around them, and the stream from the smitten rock flowing before their eyes. They died, while the glory of the Lord was in their view—while the pillar in which the Lord Himself dwelt was over their head—while, as a cloud to refresh them, it was over them by day; and as a fire to give them light, was over them by night. These their privileges did not preserve them; and neither will yours preserve you. 3. The Israelites in the wilderness may have been tempted to infer that the Lord would not execute His threatened vengeance against them,

because all were not at one and the same time visited with punishment. To some of them a respite of nearly forty years was granted. But, when apparently within reach of the Land of Promise—when its hills and mountains were in view before their eyes—when they had only to march forward one other stage and to cross the Jordan, in order to obtain possession of it—the last of the doomed generation died, and their burial there made it manifest that God's threatenings are sure. II. But in our text we are furnished with an impressive illustration of the fact, that as God will fulfil His threatenings against sinners, so ALSO HIS PROMISES IN FAVOUR OF HIS OWN PEOPLE. 1. This, in the case of Caleb and Joshua, was made manifest, notwithstanding the crowd of the ungodly with which they were mingled. But, "the Lord knoweth them that are His." He loves them, as His chosen, with an everlasting love. They are "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of their inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession." Wherever thy lot may be cast, it is His sun that shines upon thy head; it is His stars that give thee light; it is His air that thou breathest; it is His food with which thou art supplied. "Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without Him; and the hairs of thy head are all numb-red." 2. In the case of Caleb and Joshua, we are furnished with a confirmation of the truth of God's gracious promises to His people notwithstanding the dangers to which they are exposed. 3. In the instance referred to in our text we behold the fulfilment of God's gracious promises to His people, in opposition to every sentiment of distrust arising from the length and intricacy of their path. (*T. Doig, M.A.*) *The faithfulness of God*:—I. THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD TO HIS THREATENINGS. The judgment which God pronounced thirty-eight years previous He has now completely fulfilled (*cf.* chap. xiv. 11-39). 1. The immense number of the condemned does not avail for the escape of any one of them. Sentence was passed upon upwards of six hundred thousand men; "and there was not left a man of them." "Though hand join in hand," &c. (*Prov. xi. 21*). 2. The lapse of time before the complete execution of the sentence does not avail for the escape of any one. Thirty-eight years passed away before the judgment pronounced was fully carried out; but ultimately not one upon whom it was passed escaped. II. THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD TO HIS PURPOSES. III. THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD TO HIS PROMISES. He promised to spare Caleb and Joshua, and to bring them unto the promised land (*chap. xiv. 23-30*); and He spared them, and in due season brought them into that land. (*W. Jones.*) *The census of Israel*:—Thirty-eight years had passed since the first numbering at Sinai, and the people had come to the borders of the promised land. The time had come for another census. The wisdom which commanded the counting of Israel at the beginning of the wilderness journey, also determined to count them at the end of it. This would show that God did not value them less than in former years; it would afford proof that His word of judgment had been fulfilled to them; and, moreover, it would marshal them for the grand enterprise of conquering the land of Canaan. The numbering on this occasion was not of the women and children or the infirm; for the order ran thus (*ver. 2*). If the numbers of our Churches were taken in this fashion, would they not sadly shrink? We have many sick among us that need to be carried about, and nursed, and doctored. Half the strength of the Church goes in ambulance service towards the weak and wounded. Another diminution of power is occasioned by the vast numbers of undeveloped believers, to whom the apostle would have said (*Heb. v. 12*). To revise the Church rolls so as to leave none but vigorous soldiers on the muster-roll would make us break our hearts over our statistics. May the Lord send us, for this evil, health and cure! When the second census was taken, it was found that the people were nearly of the same number as at the first. Had it not been for the punishment so justly inflicted upon them, they must have largely increased; but now they had somewhat diminished. It is of God to multiply a nation, or a Church. We may not expect any advance in our numbers if we grieve the Spirit of God, and if by our unbelief we drive Him to declare that we shall not prosper. I. First, observe THE NOTABLE CHANGE WROUGHT AMONG THE PEOPLE BY DEATH (*ver. 64*). The entire mass of the nation had been changed. 1. Such changes strike us as most memorable. In the course of forty years, what changes take place in every community, in every Church, in every family! The march of the generations is not a procession passing before our eyes, while we sit, like spectators, at the window; but we are in the procession ourselves, and we, too, are passing down the streets of time, and shall disappear in our turn. 2. This change was universal throughout the whole camp. "There was not left a man of them." Thus is it among ourselves: no offices can be permanently held by the same men: "they are not suffered to con-

tinne by reason of death." No position, however lofty or lowly, can retain its old possessor. It is not only the cedars that fall, but the fir-trees feel the axe. "There is no discharge in that war." That same scythe which cuts down the towering flower among the grass, also sweeps down whole regiments of green blades. 3. The change is inevitable. We must soon quit our tents for the last battle. When the conscript number shall be drawn we may escape this year, and next; but the lot will fall upon us in due time. There is no leaping from the net of mortality wherein, like a shoal of fish, we are all enclosed. 4. All this change was still under the Divine control. Stern though the work may be, God's great and tender heart rules the ravages of death. 5. The change was beneficial. It was desirable that there should be a people trained in a better school, with a nobler spirit, fit to take possession of the promised land. The change was working rightly; the Divine purpose was being fulfilled. The incoming of new blood into the social frame is good in a thousand ways; it is well that we should make room for others who may serve our Master better. 6. These changes are most instructive. If we are now serving God, let us do so with intense earnestness, since only for a little while shall we have the opportunity to do so among men. II. THE PERPETUITY OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD. The nation is living, though a nation has died. It is the same chosen seed of Abraham with whom Jehovah is in covenant. God has a Church in the world, and He will have a Church in the world till time shall be no more. The gates of hell and the jaws of death shall not prevail against the Church, though each one of its members must depart out of this world in his turn. 1. Mark well, that "the Church in the wilderness" lives on. Everything has changed, and yet nothing has altered. Although the men who bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord wear other names, yet they fulfil the same office. The music of the sanctuary rises and falls, but the strain goes on. The hallelujah never ceases, nor is there a pause in the perpetual chorus, "His mercy endureth for ever." 2. The gaps were filled up by appointed successors. As one warrior died another man stepped into his place, even as one wave dying on the shore is pursued by another. God buries His workmen, but His work lives. 3. At this second numbering the people stood ready for greater work than they had ever done before. 4. It was Israel's joy that God's love was not withdrawn from the nation. III. THE UNCHANGEABLENESS OF THE WORD OF GOD. IV. THE ABIDING NECESSITY OF FAITH. 1. No man is, was, or ever shall be saved without faith. 2. No privilege can supply the lack of faith. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

CHAPTER XXVII.

VERS. 1-11. The daughters of Zelophehad.—*Women's rights—a parable*:—I want to use this incident for a twofold purpose. I. In respect to ITS GENERAL TEACHING. 1. I would exhibit for your imitation the faith which these five young women, the daughters of Zelophehad, possessed with regard to the promised inheritance. 2. There was this feature, too, about the faith of these five women—they knew that the inheritance was only to be won by encountering great difficulties. 3. I commend the faith of these women to you because, believing in the land, and believing that it would be won, they were not to be put about by the ill report of some who said that it was not a good land. 4. Being thus sure of the land, and feeling certain about that, we must next commend them for their anxiety to possess a portion in it. Why did they think so much about it? I heard some one say the other day, speaking of certain young people, "I do not like to see young women religious; they ought to be full of fun and mirth, and not have their minds filled with such profound thoughts." Now, I will be bound to say that this kind of philosophy was accredited in the camp of Israel, and that there were a great many young women there who said, "Oh, there is time enough to think about the good land when we get there; let us be polishing up the mirrors; let us be seeing to our dresses; let us understand how to put our fingers upon the timbrel when the time comes for it; but as for prosing about a portion among those Hivites and Hittites, what is the good of it? We will not bother ourselves about it." But such was the strength of the faith of these five women that it led them to feel a deep anxiety for a share in the inheritance. They were not such simpletons as to live only for the present. These women were taken up with prudent anxious thoughts about their own part in the

land. And let me say that they were right in desiring to have a portion there, when they recollected that the land had been covenanted to their fathers. They might well wish to have a part in a thing good enough to be a covenant-blessing. 5. But I must commend them yet again for the way in which they set about the business. I do not find that they went complaining from tent to tent that they were afraid that they had no portion. Many doubters do that; they tell their doubts and fears to others, and they get no further. But these five women went straight away to Moses. He was at their head; he was their mediator; and then it is said that "Moses brought their cause before the Lord." You see, these women did not try to get what they wanted by force. They did not say, "Oh, we will take care and get our share when we get there." They did not suppose that they had any merit which they might plead, and so get it; but they went straight away to Moses, and Moses took their cause, and laid it before the Lord. Dost thou want a portion in heaven, sinner? Go straight away to Jesus, and Jesus will take thy cause, and lay it before the Lord. II. With a view of giving the whole incident a PARTICULAR DIRECTION—1. Does it not strike you that there is here a special lesson for our unconverted sisters? Here are five daughters, I suppose young women, certainly unmarried, and these five were unanimous in seeking to have a portion where God had promised it to His people. Have I any young women here who would dissent from that? I am afraid I have! Do you not desire a portion in the skies? Have you no wish for glory? Can you sell Christ for a few hours of mirth? Will you give Him up for a giddy song or an idle companion? Those are not your friends who would lead you from the paths of righteousness. 2. Has it not a loud voice, too, to the children of godly parents? I like these young women saying that their father did not die with Korah, but that he only died the ordinary death which fell upon others because of the sin of the wilderness; and also, their saying, "Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family because he had no son?" It is a good thing to see this respect to parents, this desire to keep up the honour of the family. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

*The request of the daughters of Zelophehad; the rights of women:—*I. THE REQUEST OF THE DAUGHTERS OF ZELOPHEHAD. 1. Was presented in an orderly and becoming manner. "They stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest," &c. (ver. 2). They made their request in a regular manner, and to the proper authorities. 2. Was eminently fair and reasonable. While their father, by reason of sin, was, in common with the generation to which he belonged, excluded from the promised land, yet he had not done anything for which his children should be deprived of an inheritance therein. 3. Indicated becoming respect for their father. They vindicate him from the guilt of sharing in any of the rebellions except the general one; and they evince an earnest desire for the perpetuation of his name and family. 4. Implied faith in the promise of God to give Canaan to the Israelites. 5. Implied an earnest desire for a portion in the promised land. II. THE DIVINE ANSWER TO THEIR REQUEST. 1. Was given by Jehovah to Moses in response to his inquiries. Notice here—(1) The humility of Moses. He does not presume to decide the case himself, &c. (2) The direction which God grants to the humble. "The meek will He guide in judgment," &c. 2. Commended the cause of the daughters of Zelophehad. "The daughters of Zelophehad speak right." 3. Granted the request of the daughters of Zelophehad. "Thou shalt surely give them a possession," &c. (ver. 7). 4. Included a general law of inheritance. "And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel," &c. (vers. 8-11). Thus a great benefit accrued to the nation from the request of the daughters of Zelophehad. (W. Jones.) *The daughters of Zelophehad:—*1. The rectification of things that are wrong sometimes seems to come from man and not from God. Look at this case. It was the women themselves who began the reform. Providence did not stir first. The five women gave this reform to the economy of Israel. So it would seem on the face of the story, and many people look at the face and go no farther, and so they blunder. Suggestions are from God. The very idea which we think our own is not our own, but God's. "He is Lord of all," of all good ideas, noble impulses, holy inspirations, sudden movements of the soul upward into higher life and broader liberty. This is His plan of training men. He seems to stand aside, and to take no part in some obviously good movements, and men say, "This is a human movement, a political movement, a non-religious movement," not knowing what they are talking about, forgetting that the very idea out of which it all sprang came down from the Father of lights, that the very eloquence by which it is supported is Divinely taught, that the very gold which is its sinew is His: they do not go far enough

back in their investigation into the origin of things, or they would find God in movements which are often credited to human genius alone. 2. Everywhere the Bible is full of the very spirit of justice. It is the Magna Charta of the civilised world. This is the spirit that gives the Bible such a wonderful hold upon the confidence of mankind. Look at this case as an example. The applicants were women. All the precedents of Israel might have been pointed to as the answer to their appeal. Why create a special law for women? Why universalise a very exceptional case? Why not put these people down as sensational reformers? Yet, the case was heard with patience, and answered with dignity. Oh, women, you should love the Bible! It is your friend. It has done more for you than all other books put together. Wherever it goes it claims liberty for you, justice for you, honour for you. 3. Every question should become the subject of social sympathy and matter of religious reference. These women were heard patiently. It is something to get a hearing for our grievances. Sometimes those grievances perish in the very telling; sometimes the statement of them brings unexpected help to our assistance. This case is what may be called a secular one; it is about land and name and inheritance; and even that question was made in Israel simply a religious one. In ancient Israel, with its priestly system, men had to go to the leader and the priest first; in Christianity we can go straight to God; we have no priesthood but Christ; the way to the throne is open night and day. Oh, wronged and suffering woman, tell thy case to the Father! Oh, man, carrying a burden too heavy for thy declining strength, speak to God about the weight, and He will help thee with His great power. (*J. Parker, D.D.*)

A rightful claim:—It does the heart good to read such words as these at a time like the present, when so little is made of the proper standing and portion of God's people, and when so many are content to go on from day to day, and year to year, without caring even to inquire into the things which are freely given to them of God. Nothing is more sad than to see the carelessness with which many professing Christians treat such all-important questions of the standing, walk, and hope of the believer and the Church of God. If God, in the aboundings of His grace, has been pleased to bestow upon us precious privileges, as Christians, ought we not to seek earnestly to know what these privileges are? Ought we not to seek to make them our own, in the artless simplicity of faith? Is it treating our God and His revelation worthily, to be indifferent as to whether we are servants or sons—as to whether we have the Holy Ghost dwelling in us or not—as to whether we are under law or under grace—whether ours is a heavenly or an earthly calling? Surely not. If there be one thing plainer than another in Scripture, it is this, that God delights in those who appreciate and enjoy the provision of His love—those who find their joy in Himself. “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren; and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them” (vers. 5-7). Here was a glorious triumph, in the presence of the whole assembly. A bold and simple faith is always sure to be rewarded. It glorifies God, and God honours it. Need we travel from section to section, and from page to page of the holy volume to prove this? Need we turn to the Abrahams, the Hannahs, the Deborahs, the Rahabs, the Ruths of Old Testament times? or to the Marys, the Elizabeths, the centurions, and the Syro-phenicians of the New Testament times? Wherever we turn, we learn the same great practical truth that God delights in a bold and simple faith—a faith that artlessly seizes and tenaciously holds all that He has given—that positively refuses, even in the very face of nature's weakness and death, to surrender a single hair's breadth of the Divinely-given inheritance. Hence, then, we are deeply indebted to the daughters of Zelophehad. They teach us a lesson of inestimable value. And more than this, their acting gave occasion to the unfolding of a fresh truth which was to form the basis of a Divine rule for all future generations. The Lord commanded Moses, saying, “If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter.” Here we have a great principle laid down, in reference to the question of inheritance, of which, humanly speaking, we should have heard nothing had it not been for the faith and faithful conduct of these remarkable women. If they had listened to the voice of timidity and unbelief—if they had refused to come forward, before the whole congregation, in the assertion of the claims of faith; then, not only would they have lost their own inheritance and blessing, but all future daughters of Israel, in a like position, would have been deprived of their portion likewise. Whereas, on the contrary, by acting in the

precious energy of faith, they preserved their inheritance; they got the blessing; they received testimony from God; their names shine on the page of inspiration; and their conduct furnished, by Divine authority, a precedent for all future generations. Thus much as to the marvellous results of faith. But then we must remember that there is moral danger arising out of the very dignity and elevation which faith confers on those who, through grace, are enabled to exercise it; and this danger must be carefully guarded against. This is strikingly illustrated in the further history of the daughters of Zelophehad, as recorded in the last chapter of our book. "And the chief fathers," &c. (chap. xxxvi. 1-5). The "fathers" of the house of Joseph must be heard as well as the "daughters." The faith of the latter was most lovely; but there was just a danger lest, in the elevation to which that faith had raised them, they might forget the claims of others, and remove the landmarks which guarded the inheritance of their fathers. This had to be thought of and provided for. It was natural to suppose that the daughters of Zelophehad would marry; and moreover it was possible they might form an alliance outside the boundaries of their tribe; and thus in the year of jubilee—that grand adjusting institution—instead of adjustment, there would be confusion, and a permanent breach in the inheritance of Manasseh. This would never do; and therefore the wisdom of those ancient fathers is very apparent. We need to be guarded on every side, in order that the integrity of faith and the testimony may be duly maintained. (*C. H. Mackintosh.*) *Woman is the conscience of the world:*—Now, to live as one wishes, is said to be the rule of children. To live as one ought is the rule of men. And it is the office of woman in the world to assist men to live as they ought; to lift them to those higher levels of moral attainment, moral beauty, and power, which of themselves they will not gain. Woman has been said to be the conscience of the world, and there is a profound truth in that. Her moral intuition is clearer, her moral affection is apt to be sweeter and more powerful. It was the startled conscience of a Roman woman that almost held Pilate back from his transcendent crime. It was the conscience of Blanche of Castile which melted the noblest king France ever had, Louis IX. It was the sense of righteousness in the Scotch, in the Dutch, in the French, in the German women which upheld the Reformation and would not let it sink and die. It was the conscience of the American women which was the one invulnerable, irresistible, unsilenced enemy of American slavery. Whatever statesmen might plan about it, whatever political economists might think about it, whatever merchants might dream about it, every woman's heart knew, that was not blighted and overshadowed by the influence of the present system, that it rested on a lie, and it was that conscience in the American women sending half a million of men out, its instruments and ministers, on the bloody field, which finally overcame and swept from existence that detestable system. That conscience of woman is the tower which society will always need to have developed and regnant within it, and there is no other office so great. I do not care what philosopher is expanding his vast system of philosophic thought; I do not care what statesman is planning for his country's future; I do not care what architect is lifting the edifice into the air, or is strewing the canvas with the splendour of his own spirit, there is no other office so grand on earth as that committed to woman—Christianly culture, in fellowship with God, of bringing up her acute and dominant moral sense into contact with the minds of men, that ultimate and supremest law of the universe, the law of righteousness, for which the planets and the stars were builded; she glorifies herself and she glorifies God in that sublime ministry. (*R. S. Storrs, D.D.*)

Vers. 12-14. *Thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered.*—*Why Moses must not enter Canaan:*—Eminent as he was in grace and holiness, he was not allowed to enter with his people into the Land of Promise. This in itself must have been a sore trial. But it was tenfold more so on account of the cause; it was a judgment. He who was the meekest of men once spoke unadvisedly with his lips. The reason, then, why Moses could not enter into the Land of Promise is evident. Moses represents the law. Now we have seen that, as a believer, Moses could not enter the Land of Promise, because on one occasion he "spoke unadvisedly with his lips." But look at him as the representative of the Law, and what lesson does his inability to enter the Land of Promise rivet on our hearts? This truth, that the law cannot bring us into the Land of Promise. There was a point to which Moses could bring Israel, and then he must lie down and die, and his work must be given into other hands,

into the hands of Joshua, whose very name shows that he was an eminent type of Christ. There is a point, too, up to which the law may bring us. Where is it? It is to a knowledge of sin. "By the law," says St. Paul, "is the knowledge of sin." "I had not known sin," he says "but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Rom. vii. 7). One great purpose for which the law is given is just to teach us what we are—utterly sinful, utterly lost in ourselves. It requires perfect obedience; and, behold, in many things we offend. It makes no provision for transgression, proclaims no forgiveness. It can give no peace. The voice is terrible to the guilty. Whenever it fulfils its true purpose in the soul it empties it of self-righteousness, lays it prostrate in the dust, and makes it take the lowest place. Thus St. Paul says, "I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God" (Gal. ii. 19). And, again, "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (chap. iii. 24). Are you? Under Moses or Christ? What is your hope of glory? Is it that you have not sinned so much as others? that your life is very exemplary? that you leave no duty willingly unperformed, or service unattended? Do you think that somehow or other Christ must be yours, if your life is so excellent? Are these your thoughts? Then we must faithfully tell you that you are still under Moses, still clinging to a broken law; and we must remind you that the law can never bring you to heaven. It is Christ only who can save you, and bring you into the Land of Promise—Christ only who can reconcile you to God, and we can never come to Christ without utterly renouncing our own righteousness, and our own works, as entitling us to God's favour. (*G. Wagner.*) *The death of Moses*:—Moses must die, but only as Aaron died before him (ver. 13); and Moses had seen how easily and cheerfully Aaron had put off the priesthood first, and then the body. Let not Moses, therefore, be afraid of dying; it was but to be "gathered to his people," as Aaron was gathered. Thus the death of our near and dear relations should be improved by us. 1. As an engagement to us to think often of dying. We are not better than our fathers or brethren; if they are gone, we are going; if they are gathered already, we must be gathered very shortly. 2. As an encouragement to us to think of death without terror, and even to please ourselves with the thoughts of it, it is but to die as such and such died, if we lived as they lived, and their end was peace; they "finished their course with joy"; why, then, should we fear any evil in that melancholy valley? (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*)

Vers. 16–23. Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation.—*The spiritual leaders of men*:—I. THE WORLD'S NEED OF SPIRITUAL LEADERS. 1. The great majority of every generation are uninventive, unaspiring, cringing, servile, thoughtless, ignorant. They not only walk in moral darkness, but lack the desire, if not the capacity, to struggle into the light of moral principles. 2. Clearly, then, they require spiritual leaders, men who shall point out to them the way of honesty, truth, purity, and holiness, marching before them in all the stateliness of the Christly morality. II. THE GENUINE TYPE OF SPIRITUAL LEADERS. 1. The true spiritual leader must be a man. Not an idiot, not a charlatan, not a functionary. A "man" is a person who has right convictions of moral duty, and honestly embodies them in his daily life. 2. The true spiritual leader must be a man inspired by God. No man can be a true moral leader of the people who has not within him, as the all-animating and directing force, an unutterable abhorrence of wrong and an invincible attachment to the right, whose whole nature does not beat and beam with the soul of Divine morality. III. THE DIVINE SUCCESSION OF SPIRITUAL LEADERS. They are all in the hands of God. 1. He takes the greatest spiritual leaders away by death. 2. He raises others to supply their place. One enters into another's labours. (*Homilist.*) *A model ordination service*:—I. THAT THE PERSON ORDAINED SHOULD BE CHOSEN OF GOD FOR HIS WORK. Moses asked the Lord to "set a man over the congregation," &c. (vers. 16, 17). "And the Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua," &c. So now the Christian minister should be—1. Called by God to His work. 2. Appointed by God to his sphere of work. II. THAT THE ORDINATION IS TO THE MOST IMPORTANT WORK. III. THAT THE ORDINATION SHOULD BE CONDUCTED BY TRIED MEN. IV. THE ORDINATION SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED WITH THE IMPOSITION OF HANDS. V. THAT THE ORDINATION SHOULD INCLUDE A CHARGE TO THE ORDAINED. "Give him a charge." The duties and responsibilities of the office should be laid before those who are being set apart to it; and the experience of godly and approved men should be made available for the direction of the inexperienced. What wise and inspiring things Moses would say to Joshua in this charge! What sage counsels

drawn from his ripe experience! &c. VI. THAT THE ORDINATION SHOULD BE CONDUCTED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PEOPLE. Moreover, such an arrangement—1. Is more impressive to the person being ordained. There present with him are the immortal souls for whom he has to live and labour. 2. Tends to influence the people beneficially. As they hear of the important duties and solemn responsibilities of their minister, they should be awakened to deeper solicitude and more earnest prayer on his behalf, and to heartier co-operation with him. VII. THE ORDINATION SHOULD CONFER HONOUR UPON THE PERSON ORDAINED. VIII. THAT A PERSON SO CHOSEN OF GOD, SHOULD SEEK SPECIAL DIRECTION FROM HIM, AND SEEKING, SHALL OBTAIN IT. 1. A warning against self-sufficiency. 2. A source of encouragement and strength. (*W. Jones.*) “*The God of the spirits of all flesh*”:—I. THE AFFECTING VIEW HERE FURNISHED OF THE AGENCY AND DOMINION OF GOD IN CONNECTION WITH THE HUMAN MIND. 1. God imparts the powers of the spirit. We have nothing self-derived. 2. He claims the affections of the spirit. 3. He heals the disorders and sympathises with the sorrows of the spirit. 4. He alone can constitute the happiness of the spirit. 5. He will decide upon the future destiny of the spirit. II. THE MORAL USES OF THESE CONTEMPLATIONS. 1. Let them teach you reverence for the human mind. 2. Let them impress you with thoughts of the vast importance of personal religion. 3. Let them inspire you with practical efforts to benefit and bless society. By education—by missions, &c. 4. Let them kindle hope for the prospects of the human race. (*S. Thodey.*)

CHAPTER XXVIII.

VERS. 1-31. After this manner ye shall offer daily.—*Of the daily sacrifices*:—All these laws were in a manner before handled while the people abode at Mount Sinai. If any ask the question, why then they are here repeated? I answer, first, because they were now come to enter into the land, being in a manner upon the borders thereof (chap. xxvii. 12). God would therefore put them in mind of this that, when they should possess the land, they must be mindful of His worship and their own duty. Secondly, because few at this time remained alive which had heard, or if they had heard, could remember these laws that then were published. Thirdly, the ceremonial worship had been intermitted in the wilderness for many years, as circumcision (Josh. v.) and many other like ordinances by reason of their continual journeys, or at least continual expectation of them. Lastly, God doth hereby comfort and confirm His people after their manifold provocations and murmurings, testifying thereby that as a merciful Father He is reconciled unto them, and the remembrance of their sins buried, and that He hath determined to do them good all the days of their life. Now, the first thing to be considered is the daily sacrifice, in which was to be offered, morning and evening, a lamb, fine flour, wine, and oil; these were to be offered continually as a burnt offering upon the altar, which law was not to take place until they came into the land, as we heard before in the like case (chap. xv. 2), because in the desert they wanted many things necessary (Deut. xii. 8) which was a sufficient dispensation for the omitting of them; for when God doth require anything He giveth means to perform it, and did never impute it as a sin unto them when an inevitable necessity did hinder them, and the desire to obey is no less accepted than obedience itself. Of this daily sacrifice with the rites thereof to be performed every morning and evening we read at large (Exod. xxix. 38), they must do it day by day continually. So 1 Kings xviii., when Elijah convinced Baal's priests, there is mention made of their choosing, dressing, and offering a bullock in the morning (ver. 26), and of his doing the like “at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice” (ver. 36). Likewise “Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour” (Acts iii. 1). This was the time, being three of the clock in the afternoon, when the evening sacrifice was wont to be offered, unto which prayer also was wont to be joined. We see their practice what it was daily; now let us come to the uses toward ourselves. 1. First, see from hence by consideration of this daily offering—“a lamb every morning and a lamb every evening”—a great difference between the Old and New Testament. 2. Secondly, we must understand from hence, that as all sacrifices under the law did as it were lead us to Christ, “who is the end of the law of righteousness to every one that believeth” (Rom. x. 4); so did this daily sacrifice of “the two lambs

offered morning and evening" most plainly. He is both the Altar and the Sacrifice (Heb. xiii. 10). 3. Lastly, this daily sacrifice importeth the daily sacrifice of prayer which we ought to offer to God as our daily service due unto Him (1 Kings xviii. 36). And thus do the Hebrew doctors speak, "The continual sacrifice of the morning made atonement for the iniquities that were done in the night, and the evening sacrifice made atonement for the iniquities that were by day." It is therefore required of us to pray unto God, not once in a month, or once a week, nor only upon the Sabbath day, or publicly in the assemblies of the faithful, but we must remember Him daily that remembereth us every hour. (*W. Attersoll.*) In the beginnings of your months.—*The new moon festival*:—The moon is no unapt emblem of the Church, shining in borrowed splendour, and deriving all her light, even when clearest and full-orbed, from the sun, whose glory she reflects as she travels through the night. And very fitly she represents the economy of the law, at its highest attainments only a faint resemblance of the glory to come, and from which in reality all its own splendour was derived, sometimes only but partly shining on the Church, and often obscured and dim. The beginning of every month bespoke renewal and increase. Filling her horn night after night, and becoming larger and larger, she increases in brightness to full-orbed beauty. As the moon increased, so increased the sacrifices of the economy she was an emblem of. The natural divisions of time, days multiplying into weeks, weeks into months, and months into years, became regulating signs to obligation and hope. But progress, as light increasing more and more, bespoke imperfection, and the repetition of every new moon, denoting inefficiency, waited for something to come. "It was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin." Had the offerings of holy times increased to ever such a number, and the cattle upon a thousand hills been sacrificed, all they could have effected would have been infinitely short of the results attributable alone to the death of Christ. Rivers of wine and oil could not be a libation; neither was "Lebanon sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering." To redeem a soul, to cleanse from guilt and save from death, more than all the world is required, infinite excellence, Almighty love. (*W. Seaton.*)

CHAPTER XXIX.

VERS. 1-6. A day of blowing the trumpets.—*The Feast of Trumpets*:—Some of the Rabbins fantastically suppose that it was instituted in remembrance of the offering up of Isaac, or of deliverance from being offered, which concert is idle and nothing at all to the purpose. Others imagine that it was appointed upon occasion of the wars that the Israelites had with the Amalekites and other nations under the conduct of God, to put them in remembrance that the whole life of man is nothing else but a continual warfare (Job vii. 1; 2 Tim. ii. 1). Of this feast we read (Lev. xxiii. 24). This was accounted as a Sabbath, an holy convocation, wherein they must do no servile work. Therein the trumpets sounded aloud, and the sound thereof was heard far and near. 1. Let us come to the uses hereof in regard of ourselves, which served of purpose to stir up the people to return unto God praise and thanksgiving with joyfulness of heart for all His benefits, according to that in the Psalms (Psa. lxxxi. 1, 2, 3). So David, having experience of God's good hand toward him in many pre-servations, composed Psalm xviii, as a testimony of his thankfulness "for his deliverance from the hands of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul." So I should think that the cause of this feast was to be a feast of remembrance for His manifold mercies received in the wilderness, that thereby they might stir up themselves to be united in God. And the cause of the institution of this feast seemeth to be contrary to that which followeth, which is the feast of fasting. For as the Jews had a day to humble themselves by fasting, so they were also to have a day of rejoicing when they heard of those trumpets. And albeit we neither hear nor have these trumpets sounded in our ears to call us to the temple and place of His worship, yet ought we to praise His name cheerfully and readily with spiritual joy and gladness continually (Isa. xxxv. 2, 3, 10), with singing and thanksgiving (Isa. xlix. 20, 21); for it is certain the faithful only have true cause to rejoice (Psa. xxxii. 11; xxxiii. 1); the ungodly have no cause at all (Isa. xlviii 20-22); but rather to weep and lament (Luke vi. 25). 2. This warneth us of the

preaching of the gospel concerning Christ the Saviour of the world, the Conqueror of all our enemies and of them that hate us (Isa. lvii. 1; Zech. ix.). For this was a warlike instrument (Numb. vi. 31; Josh. vi.). God hath caused the doctrine of salvation to be sounded out into the world so that all have heard the sound of it (Psa. xix. 4; Rom. x. 18). Such a trumpet was John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, who was sent "to prepare the way of the Lord" (Mark i. 1, 2), and to call upon them to repent because the kingdom of God was at hand. And this commendeth to the ministers in the execution of their office, diligence, carefulness, continuance, cheerfulness, and zeal (1 Cor. ix. 17; 1 Pet. v. 2). 3. As the ministers must be the Lord's trumpets, so indeed ought every faithful soul to be a trumpet. For when this feast was yearly observed, such as heard the trumpets were warned by it all the year after to stir up and awaken themselves, remembering that God doth call them as with a loud voice daily, that they should yield up themselves souls and bodies unto Him to worship and serve Him as He requireth. When this feast was celebrated, all the males were not commanded to repair to Jerusalem, as they were at the three more solemn feasts (Exod. xxiii. 17), to wit, if they were free men and in health, able to go to the place of His worship (Deut. xii. 6; xvi. 2). And hence it is that the Jewish doctors, out of that law of all males appearing before the Lord three times in the year, do exempt eleven sorts; and therefore they say that women and servants are not bound, but all men are bound, except the deaf and the dumb, and the fool, and the little child, and the blind, and the lame, and the uncircumcised, and the old man, and the sick, and the tender or weak which are not able to go and travel upon their feet; nevertheless, though the people were far from Jerusalem when this feast was holden, and that they could not resort thither daily to do sacrifice in the temple, yet they were to consider in their absence that sacrifices were offered there even in their behalf, and God was worshipped there in the behalf and name of all the tribes. True it is this figure is utterly abolished by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, howbeit this remaineth that we ourselves should serve for trumpets. For as the temple being destroyed we must be spiritual temples unto God; so the trumpets being taken away, every one of us must be spiritual trumpets, that is, we should rouse up ourselves, because we are naturally so wedded to the world and unto the vanities here below that it seldom cometh into our minds to think of God, of the gospel, of the kingdom of heaven. Our ears are so possessed with the sound of earthly things, and our eyes so dazzled with the pleasures of the flesh, that we are as deaf and blind men, that can neither hear nor see what God saith unto us. He calleth unto us daily, and maketh the gospel sound aloud in the midst of us that we might have the inward remorse of a good conscience, to repent us of all our evil ways, yet we, notwithstanding this summoning of us, do remain dull and deaf, and dumb and blind. Wherefore we must not look till there be a solemn holy day to call us unto the Church, there to keep a feast of trumpets, but it must serve us all the days of our life as a spur to cause us to return to God. (*W. Attersoll.*)

Vers. 12-40. The fifteenth day of the seventh month.—The Feast of Tabernacles:—It is called the Feast of Tabernacles because during the days of this feast they were to live in tents or tabernacles, it being a memorial of God's preserving of them in the wilderness where was no house for them in which to rest. This was a most holy feast to remember them when they had no dwellings, and therefore Moses doth so largely dwell upon the solemnities of it; then they were especially enjoined to read the Law at this feast, when all Israel was to appear before the Lord (Deut. xxxi. 10; 2 Chron. viii. 13; Ezra iii. 4; Neh. viii. 14, 15; John vii. 2). This feast is now abrogated, and belonged not to the Gentiles that were converted to the faith, after the passion and ascension of Christ (Col. ii. 17; Acts xv. 10; Heb. x). Notwithstanding we must consider the inward signification of this ceremony, and see what uses remain thereof to ourselves. And therefore the prophet Zechariah (chap. xiv. 16), describing the calling of the Gentiles to the true God, and their gathering into the true Church, setteth it forth according to the manner of God's service used in the law, that they should go up from year to year to worship the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles: alluding to the ceremony of the law, as our Saviour doth (Matt. v. 23, 24), meaning that they should worship God according to His commandments, and not after their own fancies. 1. First, we learn hereby that it is a duty belonging to all to remember the days of their troubles and afflictions, from which God in great mercy hath delivered us. We ought also to consider what we have been in regard of temporal deliverances, and

in regard of spiritual deliverances from the bondage of sin (Eph. ii. 1-4, 11-13), for their deliverance from the slavery of Egypt did figure out our deliverance by Christ from the bondage of sin, Satan, and hell itself. 2. Secondly, observe from this feast that God evermore preserveth His Church, even when it is oppressed with greatest dangers and troubles, nay, then His power and mercy is made most manifest; His power shineth brightest in our weakness, and His mercy appeareth most of all in our misery. 3. Thirdly, though the Feast of Tabernacles be not any longer in use, that we should be bound to the keeping of it, yet the doctrine arising from it concerneth us as much as ever it did the Jews. Our keeping of this feast must not be for a week or twain, but all our life, so long as we live upon the earth. We must acknowledge that we are pilgrims in this world (Heb. xi. 16), and if we be not strangers in this present world we have no part in the kingdom of heaven. If, then, we will have God to accept us for His children, we must assure ourselves that this life is nothing to us but a way, or rather, indeed, a race, toward our heavenly country. It is not enough for us to go fair and softly, but we must always run apace, pressing forward with all our strength and force, holding on our way, and straining ourselves to attain to the end of our course. 4. Lastly, we are hereby put in mind of the shortness of this life; we are here for a season, and by and by gone. And albeit we make our houses never so strong, and build them up with brick and stone to continue, yet our bodies are all as tabernacles, always decaying. Let us therefore learn the doctrine of the apostle (2 Cor. v. 1), If our outward man decay we have a building prepared for us in heaven. And we must say with Peter, "I must shortly put off this my tabernacle, as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me" (2 Peter i. 14). When this lodging of ours shall decay we shall dwell in an house incorruptible. Our bodies are but as harbours made of green leaves, which are of no continuance, one blast of wind is strong enough to blow them away (Isa. xl. 6). Every man hath some disease or other about him that will not suffer him to endure long. And if he had no disease or distemper, yet wait but a while, and age itself will be a disease, and as the messenger of death unto him, that even without sickness he slideth away, as the fruit of a tree, when it is ripe, falleth down of itself, though there be no hand to pluck it, or wind to shake it, or thief to steal it, or tempest to drive it. When we diligently consider this, then we have indeed learned to keep this Feast of the Tabernacles spiritually. To conclude, therefore, let every man beware that he seek not his own ease over much. This is one rule, that we do not pamper our own flesh in the lusts thereof (Rom. xiii. 14). Secondly, such as are planted commodiously in this world must beware that they do not forget the world to come; and they that enjoy the earth at will must remember the kingdom of heaven, wherein they must only place the top of their happiness. If we seek heaven upon earth we shall never find it in the next life. Thirdly, let us use this world as though we used it not; rejoice as though we rejoice not, and weep as though we weep not, considering that the fashion of this world vanisheth away (1 Cor. vii. 30, 31). (*Ibid.*)

CHAPTER XXX.

VER. 2. *If a man vow a vow unto the Lord.—The sacred bond:*—The practice of binding the soul with vows and oaths is of very ancient date, and common to all systems of religion. Now precisely of this nature is the baptismal obligation, a sacrament in which we are most solemnly pledged to the service of God, a covenant which we are bound all the days of our life faithfully to keep and perform. In confirmation we publicly recognise our personal responsibility in that act, and profess our serious purpose to fulfil the solemn engagement; while the bishop officiating, with all the faithful present, implores for us the aid of the Holy Spirit, that we may be enabled effectually to carry out our purpose. In entering into any important transaction, obviously, nothing is more necessary than a correct idea of its nature and its significance. In order to this, in the present case, we should consider with whom it is that we make the solemn engagement. Engagements of great weight are sometimes made with men, but none are so important as those which are made with God. In joining the Freemasons, the Knights Templar, or any other voluntary association, you must assume certain obligations, and give certain pledges for

their performance, before you can have any right to the peculiar privileges of the order. But in becoming a member of Christ's flock you not only make an engagement with your Christian brethren, binding yourselves to observe and do certain things which are essential to the welfare of the sacred fraternity, but you make in your baptism and renew in your confirmation a covenant with God Himself—with God, the Father of the spirits of all flesh, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid—with God, who understands your motives better than you understand them yourselves, who cannot look upon iniquity, but hates all dissimulation with perfect hatred, and will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or bad. But let no man undertake thoughtlessly what ought to be done with the greatest deliberation and the utmost seriousness. Remember that the act you contemplate is irrevocable; the obligation you are about to assume is perpetual; the covenant you are going to ratify is an everlasting covenant, never to be forgotten. Its neglect is peril; its rupture is perdition. What you promise to renounce, you must renounce for ever; what you engage to perform, you must do all the days of your life; what you pledge yourselves to believe, is the unchangeable and everlasting faith once for all delivered to the saints. No man putting his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of heaven. Oh, how will his broken promises haunt the delinquent on the bed of death, and stand like threatening spectres before him in the twilight of eternity! Forget not, then, that the vows of God are upon you, and you cannot escape the obligation. But let not the fear of failure frighten any of you from the duty. You owe it to Christ, you owe it to the Church, you owe it to your sponsors, you owe it to your own souls, to redeem the pledge you have given. Lay hold upon the proffered strength of God, and renew your consecration to His service. He will not be wanting on His part. His word is for ever settled in heaven. Your assurance stands in "two immutable things by which it is impossible for God to lie." For He also hath vowed a vow, and sworn an oath to bind His soul with a bond; and He will not break His word, but will do according to all that hath proceeded out of His mouth. (*J. Cross, D.D.*) *The solemn obligation of religious vows*:—I. THE CASE SUPPOSED. "If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond." 1. The vow is made unto God. He is the only true and proper object of religious vows. 2. The vow binds the soul. "Swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond." "A promise to man is a bond upon the estate, but a promise to God is a bond upon the soul." 3. The vow is voluntarily made. 4. The thing vowed must be lawful. II. THE DANGER IMPLIED. "He shall not break his word," &c. There is in human nature a deep-rooted tendency to forget in health the vows which were made in sickness, and to ignore in our security and peace the vows we made in our danger and alarm. III. THE COMMAND GIVEN. 1. That he shall perform his vow. "He shall not break his word." 2. That he shall fully perform his vow. "He shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth." Conclusion: Appeal to those who have unfulfilled vows resting upon them. 1. Baptismal vows, in the case of some of you, are unfulfilled. 2. Vows made in affliction or danger by some of you have not been paid. (*W. Jones.*) *Vows not to be discouraged*:—It is not an idle or dangerous thing to form good resolutions, and make promises, and enter into pledges and covenants anew. A promise is often a bud; the attempt to keep it a flower, and success therein the fruit. Some would discourage all promises and pledges lest they be broken. We might as well bid all the trees in the spring-time keep back their buds for fear of late frost, or warn them against opening their hearts to the sun lest they be betrayed and blighted. (*Christian Age.*)

CHAPTER XXXI.

VERS. 1-12. They warred against the Midianites.—*The vengeance of Jehovah on Midian*:—I. THAT IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN IS CERTAIN. 1. The sin which the Midianites had committed. 2. The Author of the punishment of the Midianites. 3. The executioners of the punishment. 4. The severity of the punishment. (1) It fell upon an immense number. (2) It fell upon persons of every rank. (3) It involved the destruction of their towns

and villages, and the loss of their property. II. THAT GOD CAN WORK BY MANY, OR BY FEW, IN THE EXECUTION OF HIS PURPOSES. The accomplishments of the purpose of God by this small force was fitted to answer three ends. 1. To teach them that this expedition was, in a special manner, the Lord's. 2. To teach them that He can effect His purposes "by many or by few" (1 Sam. xiv. 6; Judges vii.). 3. To check any temptation or tendency to self-glorification on the part of the soldiers. III. THAT GOD HONOURS THE HOLY ZEAL OF HIS SERVANTS BY EMPLOYING THEM AS LEADERS IN THE EXECUTION OF HIS PURPOSES. IV. THAT GOD ENRICHES HIS PEOPLE WITH THE SPOILS OF THEIR ENEMIES. (*W. Jones.*) *The Midianites reckoned with:—* 1. God would have the Midianites chastised, an inroad made upon that part of their country which lay next to the camp of Israel, and which was concerned in that mischief, probably more than the Moabites, who, therefore, were let alone. God will have us to reckon those our worst enemies that draw us to sin, and since every man is tempted when he is drawn aside of his own lusts, and those are the Midianites which ensnare us with their wiles, on them we should avenge ourselves; not only make no league with them, but make war upon them by living a life of mortification. God hath taken vengeance on His own people for yielding to the Midianite's temptations; now the Midianites must be reckoned with that gave temptation; for the deceived and the deceiver are His (Job xii. 16), both accountable to His tribunal; and though judgment begin at the house of God, it shall not end there (1 Pet. iv. 17). There is a day coming when vengeance will be taken on those that have introduced errors and corruptions into the Church, and the devil that deceived men will be cast into the lake of fire. Israel's quarrel with Amalek that fought against them was not avenged till long after, but their quarrel with Midian that debauched them was speedily avenged, for they were looked upon as much the more dangerous and malicious enemies. 2. God would have it done by Moses in his life-time, that he who had so deeply resented that injury might have the satisfaction of seeing it avenged. See this execution done upon the enemies of God and Israel, and afterwards thou shalt be gathered to thy people. This was the only piece of service of this kind that Moses must farther do, and then he has accomplished, as a hireling, his day, and shall have his *quietus*. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*) *Vengeance executed on Midian:—*This is a very remarkable passage. The Lord says to Moses, "Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites." And Moses says to Israel, "Avenge the Lord of Midian." The people had been ensnared by the wiles of the daughters of Midian, through the evil influence of Balaam the son of Peor; and they are now called upon to clear themselves thoroughly from all the defilement which, through want of watchfulness, they had contracted. The sword is to be brought upon the Midianites; and all the spoil is to be made to pass either through the fire of judgment or through the water of purification. Not one jot or tittle of the evil thing is to be suffered to pass unjudged. Now, this war was what we may call abnormal. By right the people ought not to have had any occasion to encounter it at all. It was not one of the wars of Canaan. It was simply the result of their own unfaithfulness—the fruit of their own unhalloved commerce with the uncircumcised. Hence, although Joshua, the son of Nun, had been duly appointed to succeed Moses as leader of the congregation, we find no mention whatever of him in connection with this war. On the contrary, it is to Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest, that the conduct of this expedition is committed; and he enters upon it "with the holy instruments and the trumpets." All this is strongly marked. The priest is the prominent person; and the holy instruments, the prominent instrumentality. It is a question of wiping away the stain caused by their unholy association with the enemy; and, therefore, instead of a general officer with sword and spear, it is a priest with holy instruments that appears in the foreground. True, the sword is here; but it is not the prominent thing. It is the priest with the vessels of the sanctuary; and that priest the selfsame man who first executed judgment upon that very evil which has here to be avenged. The moral of all this is, at once, plain and practical. The Midianites furnish a type of that peculiar kind of influence which the world exerts over the hearts of the people of God—the fascinating and ensnaring power of the world used by Satan to hinder our entrance upon our proper heavenly portion. Israel should have had nothing to do with these Midianites; but having, in an evil hour, been betrayed into association with them, nothing remains but war and utter extermination. So with us, as Christians. Our proper business is to pass through the world as pilgrims and strangers; having nothing to do with it save to be the patient witnesses of the grace of Christ, and thus shine as lights in the midst of the surrounding moral gloom.

But, alas! we fail to maintain this rigid separation; we suffer ourselves to be betrayed into alliance with the world, and, in consequence, we get involved in trouble and conflict which does not properly belong to us at all. War with Midian formed no part of Israel's proper work. They had to thank themselves for it. But God is gracious; and hence, through a special application of priestly ministry, they were enabled, not only to conquer the Midianites, but to carry away much spoil. God, in His infinite goodness, brings good out of evil. (*C. H. Mackintosh.*)

Israel's progress:—It is instructive to compare this warfare of the children of Israel with their earlier battles. There are many points of difference between them. In Egypt, when surrounded by their enemies, they were not called to fight. They were quite unprepared for war; but God fought for them, and they were still, and held their peace. Then again, subsequently they were attacked by the Amalekites. They did not begin the encounter, but only repelled the attacks; whereas on this occasion Moses said unto the people (ver. 3). Their earlier encounters were all in self-defence—their later ones were aggressive. Here, then, we cannot but discern a mark of progress in Israel's history. At first, when they were weak, and without experience of God's power and unchanging love, they were more passive. Now that they had been formed into a more compact body, and trained to arms, and still more, had experienced the power and faithfulness of God, they were called to be aggressive, to attack and destroy the enemies of God. Now, we think, that this progress in Israel's history is typical in the Christian life. In the first beginnings of the spiritual life the young Christian's mind is chiefly passive. God's work is to show him his own needs and what are his enemies. The very spirit of the gospel is aggressive, not in a worldly sense, nor indeed in the sense in which it was true of Israel, but in a higher and holier sense; for it is a spirit of faith in God—a spirit of holy jealousy for God's glory—a spirit of deep compassion for perishing souls. Do you ever ask yourselves, What progress is my soul making? There are many signs; and it is safer not to try ourselves by one only. If you are living near to God you will be growing more and more dead to the world. But note another mark. When Moses sent them into the battle, a thousand of every tribe, he sent Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest, with them, and the holy instruments, and the trumpets to blow in his hand. What these holy instruments were we are not informed, but doubtless they were meant to be symbols of God's presence with His people. The priest, and holy instruments, and silver trumpets, were as needful as their weapons of war. These were a practical warning against a spirit of revenge, and an encouragement to depend wholly on God. They must have served to impress most powerfully on the minds of the Israelites that this war was a great moral act, and that in engaging in it they should depend wholly on God. And these accompaniments of war showed also progress in Israel's history. Their earlier battles were always acts of faith; but then no priest went forth with their army, no holy instruments were carried forth, or trumpets blown; for it was subsequently that they were brought into covenant with God at Sinai, and had still brighter tokens of His presence—subsequently, that the two silver trumpets were appointed to carry terror into the hearts of their enemies, and to make them realise that they were remembered before Jehovah. And this may suggest to us one point of difference between the earlier and later conflicts of a Christian. When he is young and inexperienced in conflict, there is generally too much confidence in self. But when God has taught him deeper lessons in the work of war, he has less confidence in self and more in God. Then it is not his own courage or skill, not his own strength or perseverance, but Christ his eternal and ever-present Priest, the holy instruments of the sanctuary, and the silver trumpet of the gospel, which are his great and only hope of victory. But there is still another point of progress discernible in this part of Israel's history, and that is in the use that was made of the spoils of the Midianites. Jehovah gave them this victory. They all felt it. It was in His name that they went forth, and in His name that they triumphed. Here we find that they "brought the captives, and the prey, and the spoil, to Moses and Eleazar, the priest, and unto the congregation of the children of Israel" (ver. 12). And then a division of the booty took place. It was divided into two equal parts, one of which was given to those who went into the battle, and the other belonged to those who remained in the camp. Those who encountered the Midianites being but a small part of Israel, only twelve thousand men, had in reality the largest share; and this was but right, as they had been exposed to the dangers of war. But this was not the whole of the arrangement. The most important part remains to be mentioned. After this division had taken place, a part

was to be consecrated to God. Of that which belonged to the warriors themselves one five-hundredth part was offered unto the Lord as a heave-offering, as we are expressly told, "And Moses gave the tribute which was the Lord's heave-offering unto Eleazar the priest" (ver. 4). This portion, then, came to the priests. Of the other part, which belonged to those who did not go into battle, one-fiftieth part was consecrated to God, "And of the children of Israel's half, thou shalt take one portion of fifty of the persons, of the beeves, of the asses, and of the flocks, and of all manner of beasts" (ver. 30). This portion belonged to the Levites. And so, if we compare together the portion of the priests with that of the Levites, we find that was as one to ten. But even this is not all. When those who went into battle were numbered, it was found that there "lacked not one man," not one was lost. This was a wonderful proof of God's care and protection. No less than twenty-four thousand fell by the plague, and not even one in the war with a powerful people. This produced a strong impression on the minds of the officers. They were thankful, as well they might be, for God's goodness; and they showed their gratitude by making an additional freewill-offering to God. "We have, therefore," they say, "brought an oblation for the Lord, what every man hath gotten, of jewels, of gold, chains and bracelets, rings, ear-rings, and tablets, to make an atonement for our souls before the Lord" (ver. 50); and this offering was brought by Moses and Eleazar the priest into the tabernacle of the congregation, for a "memorial for the children of Israel before the Lord." Now in all this we can discern progress in Israel's history. In the earlier part of it we do not meet with any such arrangement, but when brought into immediate covenant union with God, He taught them practically that they themselves, and all that they had, belonged to Himself. He trained them to a spirit of self-denial. This is an important lesson which this history impresses upon us. If we were asked, "What are the two graces in which Christians are most wanting?" we should answer, "charity" and "self-denial"; that charity which bears long, which covers a multitude of sins, and that spirit of self-denial which leads us habitually to crucify the old man, and to place God's glory before our own comfort, ease, and pleasure. There are many Christians who are sound in doctrine, and who seem to glory that they are free from this and that error, but there is much self-indulgence in their lives. (*G. Wagner.*)

Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword.—*The fate of Balaam:*—Who shall describe the terrors of this recreant prophet, during that brief moment that ensued between the lifting up and the letting down of that fatal weapon? We know how Balaam regarded death. We know that he regarded it with dread. "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." And now he was about to die the death of the wicked! As in a moment, we may be sure, the whole panorama of his life, and its true significance, flashed before him. **I. DEATH THE TESTING TIME OF LIFE.** We may exaggerate the importance of death. We may treat it as more important than life; whereas its chief importance is in relation to life. But in its relation to life its importance is scarcely to be exaggerated. And its chief significance, in this respect, undoubtedly consists in its bearing on the future. **II. THE AWFULNESS OF DEATH TO ONE WHO HAS LIVED A SINFUL AND UNHOLY LIFE.** There can be no doubt that God did His utmost to save this man. Nothing that was likely to be helpful to his salvation was withheld from him; and all this Balaam must have felt and realised, when at last his course of crime had brought him to that life-revealing spot, the shadow of death. And if such was his retrospect in the hour of death, what must have been the prospect that opened up to his imagination and his fears? And what makes the fate of Balaam so terrible to think of, is the apparently minute point of departure from the course of rectitude in which his wrong-doing commenced. Balaam only, at first, desired to have the pecuniary recompense which the service of Balak promised him. He had no desire to do wrong. He did not love unrighteousness; he only loved the "wages" of unrighteousness. And yet that little germ of evil in his breast at last overcame all right feeling and all right principle; and reduced the famous prophet of Pethor to the level of the lowest schemer and the basest plotter. The smallest angle at the juncture of two lines will, if these lines be continually produced, lead them wider and wider at every stage. And so if there be the least departure from the path of right at the beginning there will be infinitely divergency in the end. (*W. Roberts.*)

The doom of the double-hearted:—**I. HE WANTED TO SERVE TWO MASTERS.** These were the same as the Lord in after days designated God and mammon. He wanted not to offend either; to please both. He was like Issachar crouching between two burdens. Such is the certain failure of all who make the like attempt. **II. HE WANTED TO**

EARN TWO KINDS OF WAGES. The wages of righteousness and the wages of unrighteousness (2 Pet. ii. 15), were both in his eyes; he would fain have the pay both of God and of the devil. He was unwilling to do or say anything which would deprive him of either. He was as cautious and cunning as he was covetous. III. HE WANTED TO DO TWO OPPOSITE THINGS AT THE SAME TIME. He wished both to bless and to curse. He was willing to do either according as it might serve his interests. The only question with him was, "Would it pay?" IV. HE WANTED TWO KINDS OF FRIENDSHIP. V. HE WANTED TO HAVE TWO RELIGIONS. He saw religion to be a paying concern, a profitable trade, and he was willing to accept it from anybody or everybody, to adopt it from any quarter if it would but raise him in the world, and make his fortune. But this double service, and double friendship, and double religion, would not do. He would make nothing by them. They profited him nothing either in this life or that to come. His end was with the ungodly, his portion with the enemies of Israel. And his soul, where could it be? Not with Israel's God, or Israel's Christ, or in Israel's heaven. He reaped what he sowed. He was a good specimen of multitudes in these last days. They want as much religion as will save them from hell; not an atom more. The world is their real god; gold is their idol; it is in mammon's temple that they worship. Look to thy latter end. What it is to be? Where is it to be? With whom is it to be? Anticipate thy eternity. Is it to be darkness or light, shame or glory? (*H. Bonar, D.D.*)

Balaam's death:—What a death was this to die for one who had been a prophet of the Lord—one who had been privileged to hold converse with Deity, and to foretell the purposes of the supreme mind! How little could he ever have imagined that he should come to this! What! he, with his great gifts and high official position—he stoop down from the eminence on which he stood to take up the sword of a rebel against Jehovah—to identify himself with a nation of debased idolaters, and then end his life amid the wild tumult of battle in a vain effort to defend their cause! He degrade himself to such an extent as that? Impossible; yet so it happened. How this death contrasts with that which he had so ardently desired! Death in sanguinary conflict, surrounded by dying thousands of the enemies of God, with the din of arms and the fierce war-cry of opposing forces sounding in his ears; how different from "the death of the righteous," calmly commending his soul into the hands of a faithful Creator, antedating heavenly joys, catching a smile from the Divine countenance, and then peacefully "dropping into eternity"! A death in a state of apostasy from God, in open rebellion against His will, in impious defiance of His power, the death of Balaam was a death without hope. Not a ray of light is there to irradiate or relieve the gloom that gathers in thick and portentous blackness over the spot where he fell. (*C. Merry.*)

Ver. 16. *The counsel of Balaam.*—*The counsel of Balaam:*—It would seem, then, that this people that was to "dwell alone and not be reckoned among the nations" had not dwelt alone; and that one man, at least, of the people in whom God had not beheld iniquity nor seen perverseness, had been guilty of the most flagrant iniquity and perverseness. For not only had he, an Israelitish prince, brought the daughter of a Midianitish prince unto his brethren—which was in itself an unlawful act—but he had done this openly and shamelessly, in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of Israel (chap. xxv. 6). But how came it to pass that these Moabites and Midianites, who, only yesterday as it were, displayed such relentless hostility to Israel, should, to-day, be upon such friendly terms with them? How was it that, whereas but yesterday—so to speak—the king of Moab sent princes of Moab and Midian to Balaam, the son of Beor to Pethor in Mesopotamia, entreating him to come and curse the Israelites—sparing nothing to secure this end—these hostile princes are now giving their daughters to the Israelites in the most intimate companionship? Surely there must be some treachery in this proceeding! And so it seemed there was. Balaam, after his repulse by Balak, had fled, not to his own land, but to Midian, the confederate of Moab; and, not daring to curse the people himself, had suggested to the Midianites a method of leading them into iniquity, as a means of bringing a curse on them from God. And this new scheme had propitiated Balak, who had been so fiercely enraged against Balaam, and who now "consulted" (Mic. vi. 5) with Balaam; who "counselled" (chap. xxxi. 16) this expedient of mischief. So the matter came out upon the death of Balaam, and so is it explained in my text. 1. Balaam plainly committed this crime with his eyes open to the wrong he was doing. Out of his own mouth we may judge him. In a moment of prophetic inspiration he protested to

Balak that his eyes were open ; that he had heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the Most High. Balaam's sin, then, was committed knowingly, consciously, wilfully. He was not "overtaken in a fault." He set himself to do wickedly. 2. And he was influenced to take this course by the meanest of motives. He "loved the wages of unrighteousness." 3. And if anything could have aggravated the meanness of the motive that influenced Balaam in betraying Israel, it was the baseness of the method he adopted to accomplish that design. God had revealed to him, in prophetic insight, the secret of Israel's greatness and strength. And Balaam used the very inspiration which God gave him to injure, fatally, God's own chosen people. And the cowardice of his procedure was in keeping with its baseness. He would not touch Israel himself. He dare not utter a word against them ; but he could whisper suggestions of evil into the ears of others, that they might execute the diabolical design. (*W. Roberts.*) *Balaam's devilish policy* :—This policy was fetched from the bottom of hell. "It is not for lack of desire that I curse not Israel ; thou dost not more wish their destruction, than I do thy wealth and honour ; but so long as they hold firm with God, there is no sorcery against Jacob : withdraw God from them, and they shall fall alone, and curse themselves ; draw them into sin, and thou shalt withdraw God from them. There is no sin more plausible than wantonness. One fornication shall draw in another, and both shall fetch the anger of God after them ; their sight shall draw them to lust, their lust to folly, their folly to idolatry ; and now God shall curse them for thee unasked." Where Balaam did speak well, there was never any prophet spake more divinely ; where he spake ill, there was never any devil spake more desperately. Ill counsel seldom succeedeth not ; good seed often falls out of the way, and roots not ; but the tares never light amiss. This project of the wicked magician was too prosperous. (*Bp. Hall.*)

CHAPTER XXXII.

VERS. 1-5. The children of Gad, and the children of Reuben, came and spake unto Moses. — *The selfish request of the Reubenites and Gadites* :—I. MEAN SELFISHNESS. In the competitions of business and of professional and social life there is often very much of mean selfishness, and that even amongst persons who are avowedly Christians. But selfishness is utterly opposed to the spirit of Jesus Christ. II. PREDOMINANT WORLDLINESS. In this day there are many, who regard themselves as Christians, who resemble the Reubenites and Gadites—many who are chiefly influenced by temporal and worldly considerations in—1. The selection and conduct of their business. 2. The formation of matrimonial alliances ; and 3. The determination of their residence. Temporal gain, social surroundings, salubrity of atmosphere, and similar things are often deeply considered, while sacred and spiritual things are well-nigh overlooked. III. DISREGARD OF THE INTERESTS AND RIGHTS OF THEIR BRETHREN. IV. DISPARAGEMENT OF THEIR DIVINE CALLING AND DESTINY. What vast numbers practically despise their exalted spiritual calling in the Gospel for the passing and perishing things of this world ! V. WANT OF FAITH IN THE DIVINE PROMISE. It is not improbable that they had their doubts as to their taking the good land beyond Jordan, and therefore sought to secure for themselves what the nation had already conquered. Such unbelief is a grievous dishonour to God. Conclusion : Mark the folly of this request of the Reubenites and Gadites. The country which they desired had very grave disadvantages. A selfish policy is generally a self-defeating policy. (*W. Jones.*) *Reuben and Gad* :—This is too often the prayer of prosperous men. They find upon the earth what they regard as heaven enough. If they could but double their income, they would sigh for no bluer heaven ; if they could but have health without increasing the income—simply increase of physical energy—they would desire no better paradise than they can find on earth. Who likes to cross the Jordan that lies before every man ? There is a point at which it becomes very difficult to say to God, "We are still ready to go on ; whatever next may come—great wilderness or cold river, or high stony mountain—we are still ready to go on ; Thy will be done, and Thy way be carried out to its last inch." Yet, until we reach the resignation which becomes triumph and the triumph which expresses itself, not in loud sentiment but in

quiet and deep obedience, we have not begun to realise the meaning of the kingdom of heaven. What was the answer of Moses? "Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?" (ver. 6). What suggestion there is in the colour of every tone! What sublime mockery! What a hint of cowardice! What an infliction of judgment upon meanness! Sometimes the only way in which we can put a rational rebuke is in the form of an inquiry. But there was more to be considered. "And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the Lord hath given them?" (ver. 7). Take the word "discourage" in any sense, and it is full of meaning. Perhaps a stronger word might have been inserted here—a word amounting to aversion and utter dislike to the idea of going forward. Our actions have social effects. There are no literal individualities now; we are not separate and independent pillars; we are parts of a sum-total; we are members one of another. Then Moses utilised history (vers. 8–13). The past speaks in the present. Our fathers come up in a kind of resurrection in our own thinking and our own propositions. Meanness of soul is handed down; disobedience is not buried in the grave with the man who disobeyed. This is a broad law; were it rightly understood and applied, many a man's conduct would be explained which to-day appears to be quite inexplicable. Appetites descend from generation to generation; diseases may sleep through one generation, and arise in the next with aggravated violence. Men should take care what they do. Then Reuben and Gad said they would fight; they would build sheepfolds for their cattle, and cities for their little ones; but they themselves would go ready armed before the children of Israel, until they had brought them unto their place, and then their little ones should dwell in the fenced cities because of the inhabitants of the land. Moses said, in effect, "So be it: if you complete the battle you shall locate yourselves here; but you must complete the battle, and when the conquest is won, you may return and enjoy what you can here of green things and flowing water; but, let me tell you, 'if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord'; this is not a covenant between you and me—between man and man; but your sin will be against the Lord, 'and be sure your sin will find you out.'" The matter was not easily arranged; Heaven was invoked, tones of judgment were employed, a covenant was entered into which bore the seal eternal. That law still continues. Supposing there to be no Bible, no altar, no invisible judgment-seat, no white throne—as has been conceived by sacred poetry—there is still, somehow, at work, in this mysterious scheme of things, a law of a constabulary kind which arrests the evil-doer, which makes the glutton sick, which makes the voluptuary weak, which stings the plotter in the very time which he had planned for his special joy. There is, account for it as we may, a ghostliness that looks upon us through the cloud, so that we feel the blood receding from the face, or feel it returning in violent torrents, making the face red with shame. But there is the law, give it what name we may, shuffle out of religious definitions as we like: the wrong-doer lays his head on a hard pillow; the bad man stores his property in unsafe places. (*J. Parker, D.D.*)

Vers. 6–15. Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here? And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel?—*The expostulation of Moses*:—1. He shows them what he apprehended to be evil in this motion; that it would discourage the heart of their brethren (vers. 6, 7). What, saith he, with a holy indignation at their selfishness, "shall your brethren go to war, and expose themselves to all the hardships of the field, and shall ye sit here at your ease? No, do not mistake yourselves; you shall never be indulged by me in this sloth and cowardice." It ill becomes any of God's Israel to sit down unconcerned in the difficult concerns of their brethren, whether public or personal. 2. He minds them of the fatal consequences of the unbelief and faint-heartedness of their fathers when they were, as these here, just ready to enter Canaan. He recites the story very particularly (vers. 8–13). "Thus did your fathers," whose punishment should be a warning to you to take heed of sinning after the similitude of their transgression. 3. He gives them fair warning of the mischief that would be likely to follow upon this separation they were about to make from the camp of Israel; they would be in danger of bringing wrath upon the whole congregation, and hurrying them all back again into the wilderness (vers. 14, 15). "Ye are risen up in your father's stead" to despise the pleasant land, and reject it as they did, when we hoped you were risen up in their stead to possess it. It was an encouragement to Moses to see what an increase of men they were, but a discouragement to see that they were without an increase of sinful men, treading in the steps of their fathers' impiety. It is sad to

see the rising generations in families and countries seldom better, and often worse, than that which went before it. And what comes of it? why, it augments the fierce anger of the Lord; not only continues that fire, but increaseth it, and fills the measure often, till it overflow in a deluge of desolation. Note, if men did consider as they ought what would be in the end of sin, they would be afraid of the beginnings of it. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*) *The faithful rebuke of Moses*.—I. THE INJUSTICE OF THEIR PROPOSAL. Why should they have as their inheritance that country which all had assisted to conquer, and leave their brethren to conquer other possessions for themselves without their aid? II. THE TENDENCY OF THEIR PROPOSAL TO DISHEARTEN THEIR BRETHREN. Because the granting of this request would be likely to—1. Reduce their numbers. 2. Engender dissatisfaction. III. THE WICKEDNESS OF THEIR PROPOSAL. 1. Unbelief of God's word. 2. Depreciation of God's goodness. IV. THE TENDENCY OF THEIR PROPOSAL TO CALL DOWN THE WRATH OF GOD. 1. The cause of His anger (ver. 14). 2. The expression of His anger (ver. 15). 3. The subjects of His anger. "All this people." V. THE SOLEMN EXAMPLE BY WHICH MOSES ENFORCED HIS REBUKE (vers. 8–13). (*W. Jones.*) *The sin of discouraging our brethren*.—The children of God are very prone to be discouraged. The truth is, that their path through the wilderness is not an easy one. The danger of discouragement being so very great, it is the duty of Christians to encourage each other, to exhort one another in words of kindness, cheerfulness, and love, to hold on their way. How beautiful is the example of Jesus, in the tenderness of the sympathy wherewith He encouraged the weak. But Christians are too often unlike their Master, wanting in that gentle and encouraging sympathy. It may be well to note more carefully some of the ways in which Christians most frequently discourage each other's hearts. 1. First, then, we may mention an inconsistent life. There is nothing so beautiful on earth as a consistent life, a life entirely consecrated to God—devoted to one great object, and guided by one great principle. Such a life makes people feel that there is something from God in true religion; and it greatly encourages those who are seeking Christ. On the contrary, the inconsistent lives of Christians are the greatest possible hindrance to the world, and to those who are weak in faith. There was great apparent inconsistency in the request of the Reubenites. They ought to have valued God's promise, and have wished to settle within the limits of the Promised Land; but the rich pastures of the territories already won, and situated without its boundaries, were a temptation to them. And Moses saw at once the effect that this example would have upon the hearts of their brethren. It would discourage them. It is just so with those who ought to live for heaven, who profess to be looking for it, and yet set their affections on things below—on the creature, or the world, or on money. This contrariety between the profession and the life cannot be otherwise than a stumblingblock to the world, and a great discouragement to those who are weak in faith. Some it hardens in their unbelief; others are led by it into painful doubt and perplexity. It is no small sin to discourage our brethren. 2. But again, the natural heart is very prone to think that religion is a gloomy thing, a system of sacrifices; and this we cannot wonder at, as it only sees what must be given up, but cannot perceive what is gained. It cannot understand that excellency of the knowledge of Christ which makes sacrifices easy and delightful, and renders things impossible to flesh and blood altogether possible. Now, when Christians are gloomy and desponding, when their look is melancholy and their language dissatisfied, it tends to confirm the notion that true religion does not make the heart happy, does not give it rest; and so the wanderer, discouraged at the outset, seeks cheerfulness and pleasure elsewhere, and not in Christ. Now, why should Christians ever give such an impression of religion? Surely it must be of all things the most blessed to be reconciled to God, to have the forgiveness of all sins. It is true that the Christian has many trials which are unknown to the world, fightings within, as well as fears without. But his fightings are not hopeless struggles. They are the precursors of victory; for, says St. Paul, we are made more than conquerors through Him that loved us. 3. Another way of discouraging our brethren is by showing want of sympathy in their difficulties. Hardness and want of sympathy have much to do with making the world as full of misery as it is. 4. Another case of discouragement to others is our shrinking, or appearing to shrink, from difficulties. Moses evidently thought that this was the motive of the request of the Reubenites. They wished to settle down in a land already won, instead of sharing the danger of war with their brethren. "Shall your brethren go to war, and ye sit here?" The event proved that happily this was not the case.

Moses was mistaken in his suspicions. But it is quite clear, that had this been the case scarcely anything could have discouraged the rest of the Israelites more completely. Now this, we fear, is not a very uncommon cause of discouragements. There are too many Christians who shrink from difficulties. They prefer some smooth and easy course, the pastures of Jazer and Gilead to the warfare and conflicts of Canaan. If some easy work is proposed to them, which is accompanied by no great difficulties, and which involves no real self-denial, they may be ready for it. But they do not like to take up the cross, and especially a daily cross—one that lasts long. We ought not to shrink from difficulties in doing the will of God. It is usually God's way to surround His own work with difficulties, and often with such difficulties as His own hand alone can remove. And this He does to try His people's faith, not to discourage them. Viewed at a distance, like the wall of some great fortress, they appear very formidable, but when grappled with in faith, one after another they fall away. There are beautiful promises to encourage us under difficulties (Isa. xli. 14, 16; Zech. iv. 7). Let us then settle it well in our hearts that we must have difficulties in doing the work of God; but let not these dismay our hearts or lead us to discourage our brethren. (G. Wagner.)

Vers. 16-27. We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones. But we ourselves will go ready armed.—*The amended proposal of the Reubenites and Gadites*:—I. THE AMENDED PROPOSAL MADE. 1. That they should provide at once for the safe settlement of their families and their flocks and herds. 2. That they would assist their brethren in the conquest of Canaan. 3. That they would not leave their brethren until that conquest was completely effected. 4. That they would not seek for any inheritance with their brethren on the other side of the Jordan. II. THE AMENDED PROPOSAL ACCEPTED. 1. Moses re-affirms the chief terms of their proposal. 2. He accepts their proposal as righteous. 3. He warns them that if they fail to faithfully fulfil its terms punishment will overtake them. III. THE AMENDED PROPOSAL CONFIRMED. LESSONS: 1. The duty of manifesting a practical regard for the rights and interests of others. 2. The importance of faithfully fulfilling the engagements into which we enter. 3. The delusiveness of the notion that any one can sin and escape the punishment of sin. (W. Jones.) *Conflict the condition of attainment, and suffering the consequence of sin*:—I. A TRUTH TO BE CONFIRMED—that those who would share in the inheritance must engage in the conflict. II. A WARNING TO BE APPLIED—that sin brings punishment; and that those who think to sin with impunity, under a dispensation of mercy, will find themselves fearfully disappointed. III. A PERSONAL APPLICATION TO BE MADE. (Samuel Thodey.) *Necessity for conflict in the open field*:—A skilful botanist, an exile in a foreign land, was thankful to accept the position of an under-gardener in the service of a man of wealth. While filling this humble office, his attention was attracted by a rare plant which had been sent to the owner of the garden, and which had been placed in the hot-house under the impression that it was a native of the tropics. So far from thriving, it had begun so evidently to wither and decay that the unskilful gardener was about to remove it to a still warmer place, when the observant eye of the botanist discovered it to be a production of the Arctic regions, and insisted that it should be exposed to the icy breath of winter. Forthwith it revived, and began to flourish. In like manner, if Christians will shut themselves up in the confined and heated atmosphere of worldliness and sin, they can neither hope for growth nor fruitfulness. Heroic conflict in the open field with the enemies of our salvation, the overcoming of temptation in the way of daily duty, constant communication with the Holy Spirit of God in the use of the appointed means of grace—these are the only safeguards for the soul. (Christian Age.)

Vers. 23. Be sure your sin will find you out.—*The great sin of doing nothing*:—I. WHAT WAS THIS SIN? A learned divine has delivered a sermon upon the sin of murder from this text, another upon theft, another upon falsehood. If you take the text as it stands, there is nothing in it about murder, or theft, or anything of the kind. In fact, it is not about what men do, but it is about what men do not do. The iniquity of doing nothing is a sin which is not so often spoken of as it should be. A sin of omission is clearly aimed at in this warning—"If ye will not do so, be sure your sin will find you out." 1. It was the sin of idleness and of self-indulgence. "We have cattle: here is a land that yields much pasture: let us have this for our cattle, and we will build folds for our sheep with the abundant

stones that lie about, and we will repair these cities of the Amorites, and we will dwell in them. They are nearly ready for us, and there shall our little ones dwell in comfort. We do not care about fighting: we have seen enough of it already in the wars with Sihon and Og. Reuben would rather abide by the sheepfolds. Gad has more delight in the bleating of the sheep and in the folding of the lambs in his bosom than in going forth to battle." Alas, the tribe of Reuben is not dead, and the tribe of Gad has not passed away! Many who are of the household of faith are equally indisposed to exertion, equally fond of ease. 2. This sin may be viewed under another aspect, as selfishness and unbrotherliness. Gad and Reuben ask to have their inheritance at once, and to make themselves comfortable in Bashan, on this side Jordan. What about Judah, Levi, Simeon, Benjamin, and all the rest of the tribes? How are they to get their inheritance? They do not care, but it is evident that Bashan is suitable for themselves with their multitude of cattle. Some of them reply, "You see, they must look to themselves, as the proverb hath it, 'Every man for himself, and God for us all.'" Did I not hear some one in the company say, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Soul-murder can be wrought without an act or even a will; it is constantly accomplished by neglect. Yonder perishing heathen—does not the Lord inquire, "Who slew all these?" The millions of this city unevangelised—who is guilty of their blood? Are not idle Christians starving the multitude by refusing to hand out the bread of life? Is not this a grievous sin? "But oh," says another, "they can conquer the land themselves. God is with them, and He can do His own work, and therefore I do not see that I need trouble myself about other people." That is selfishness; and selfishness is never worse than when it puts on the garb of religion. 3. But with this there was mingled ingratitude of a very dark order. These children of Gad and Reuben would appropriate to themselves lands for which all the Israelites had laboured. God had led them forth to battle, and they had conquered Sihon and Og, and now these men would take possession of what others have struggled for, but they are not to fight themselves. This is vile ingratitude; and I fear it is common among us at this very day. How come we to be Christians at all? Instrumentally, it is through those holy missionaries who won our fathers from the cruel worship of the Druids, and afterwards from the fierce dominion of Woden and Thor. Are we to receive all, and then give out nothing at all? Are we to be like candles burning under bushels? Are we to waste our life by much receiving and little distributing? This will never do. This will not be life, but death. Remember the Dead Sea, and tremble lest thou be like it, a pool accursed and cursing all around thee! The text, when spiritually interpreted, says concerning our personal service in the conquest of the world for Christ—"if ye do not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out." 4. Again, we may view this from another point of view. It is the sin of untruthfulness. These people pledged themselves that they would go forth with the other tribes, and that they would not return to their own homes until the whole of the campaign was ended. Now, if after that they did not go to the war, and did not fight to the close of it, then they would be guilty of a barefaced lie. It is a wretched thing for a man to be a covenant-breaker. It is sacrilege for any man to lie, not only unto man, but unto God. I would speak very tenderly, but if any man has been converted from the error of his ways, by that very conversion he is bound to serve the Lord. Now, if he lives only to make money and hoard it, and he does nothing for God's Church and for poor sinners, is not his baptism a lie? Once more, and I will have done with this painful subject. What would their sin be? 5. According to Moses it would be a grave injury to others. Do you not notice how he put it to them? "Moses said unto the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?" What an example to set! If one Christian man is right in never joining a Christian Church, then all other Christian men would be right in not doing so, and there would be no visible Christian Church. Do you not see, you non-professing believers, that your example is destructive to all Church life? 6. Moses goes on to remark that if these people did not go forth to war, they would discourage all the rest. "Wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the Lord hath given them?" It is no slight sin to discourage holy zeal and perseverance in others. May we never be guilty of killing holy desires even in children! How often has a burning desire in a boy's heart been quenched by his own father, who has thought him too impulsive, or too ardent! How frequently

the conversation of a friend, so called, has dried up the springs of holy desire in the person with whom he has conversed! Let it not be so. Yet without cold words our chill neglects may freeze. We cannot neglect our own gardens without injuring our neighbours. One mechanic coming late among a set of workmen may throw the whole company out of order for the day. One railway truck off the rails may block the entire system. Depend upon it, if we are not serving the Lord our God, we are committing the sin of discouraging our fellow-men. They are more likely to imitate our lethargy than our energy. Why should we wish to hinder others from being earnest? How dare we rob God of the services of others by our own neglect? II. NOTICE WHAT WAS THE CHIEF SIN IN THIS SIN? Of course, if the Reubenites did not keep their solemn agreement to go over Jordan, and help their brethren, they would sin against their brethren; but this is not the offence which rises first to the mind of Moses. Moses overlooks the lesser, because he knows it to be comprehended in the greater; and he says, "Behold, ye have sinned against the Lord." 1. It is disobedience against the Lord not to be preaching His truth if we are able to do so. The hearer of the gospel is bound to be a repeater of the gospel. 2. We are certainly guilty of ingratitude, if, as I have already said, we owe so much to other men, and yet do not seek to bless mankind; but chiefly we owe everything to the grace of God, and, if God has given us grace in our own hearts, and saved us with the precious blood of the Only-Begotten, how can we sit still, and allow others to perish? 3. There would be sin against God in the conduct of these people, if they did not aid in the conquest of Canaan, for they would be dividing God's Israel. Shall the Lord's heritage be rent in twain? God meant them all to keep together. Can it be that any of us are dividing the Church of God; that is, dividing it into drones and workers? This would be a terrible division: and I fear that it exists already. It is apparent to those who are able to observe; and it is mourned over by those who are jealous for the God of Israel. Half the schisms in Churches arise out of the real division which exists between idlers and workers. Mind this. Be not sowers of division by being busy-bodies, working not at all. III. We have now reached the last point, and the point that is most serious: WHAT WILL COME OF THIS SIN OF DOING NOTHING? What will come of it? "Be sure your sin will find you out." 1. It would find them out thus: they would be ill at ease. One of these days their sin would leap upon their consciences as a lion on its prey. 2. When conscience was thus aroused, they would also feel themselves to be mean and despicable. Their manhood would be held cheap by the other tribes. 3. They would be enfeebled by their own inaction. How much of sacred education we miss when we turn away from the service of God! 4. Their sin would also have found them out, had they fallen into it, because they would have been divided from the rest of God's Israel. Those who are non-workers lose much by not keeping pace with those who are running the heavenly race. The active are happy: the hand of the diligent maketh rich in a spiritual sense. There is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty: I am sure it is so in a spiritual sense. 5. To come more practically home, if you and I are not serving the Lord, our sin will find us out. (1) It will find us out perhaps in this way. There will be many added to the Church, and God will prosper it, and we shall hear of it: but we shall feel no joy therein. We had no finger in the work, and we shall find no comfort in the result. (2) It may be that you will begin to lose all the sweetness of public services. By doing nothing you lose your appetite. (3) I have known this sin find people out in their families. There is a Christian man: we honour and love him, but he has a son that is a drunkard. Did his good father ever bear any protest against strong drink in all his life? Every man should labour by precept and example to put down intemperance, and he who does not do so may be sure that his sin will find him out. Here is another. His children have all grown up thoughtless, careless, giddy. He took them to his place of worship, and he now inquires, "Why are they not converted?" Did he ever take them one by one and pray with them? If we do not look after God's children, it may be that He will not look after ours. "No," says God, "there were other people's children in the streets, and you had no concern about them, why should your children fare better?" "Be sure your sin will find you out." (C. H. Spurgeon.) Sin will come to light:—I. GOD CERTAINLY SHOWS HIS PURPOSE TO PUNISH SIN BY THE WAY HE CAUSES WOE TO COME ON SOME SINNERS HERE. The drunkard, the glutton, and the cheat, the liar and the lewd, are not the only examples. Most frauds are exposed. Nearly all murders are brought to light. Men may plot very secretly, and think their crimes are hid. But

Providence calls on stones and beams of timber, on tracks and pieces of paper, to be witnesses of the crime. Then all that class of sins which are not punishable by human laws, God often punishes with a loss of respect, esteem, or confidence.

II. MEN MIGHT BE SURE THAT THEIR SIN WILL FIND THEM OUT BY THE SORE JUDGMENTS WHICH GOD SOMETIMES SENDS ON MEN FOR THEIR SINS. On this matter we should exercise candour, caution, and charity, and not call that an angry judgment which is but a dark doing of love. Still there are on earth sore and marked judgments. Look at the history of Achan, of Korah, &c. Of thirty Roman emperors, proconsuls, and high officials, who distinguished themselves by their zeal and rage against the early Christians, it is recorded that one became speedily deranged after an act of great cruelty; one was slain by his own son; one became blind; the eyes of one started out of his head; one was drowned; one was strangled; one died in a miserable captivity; one fell dead in a manner that will not bear to be told; one died of so loathsome a disease that several of his physicians were put to death, because they could not abide the stench that filled his room; two committed suicide; a third attempted it, but had to call for help to finish the bloody work; five were assassinated by their own servants or people; five others died the most horrible deaths, having many and strange diseases; and eight were killed in battle, or after being taken prisoners. Men have more to do with sin than to commit it.

III. ONE MAY ESCAPE DETECTION AND STRANGE JUDGMENTS, AND STILL HIS SINS MAY FIND HIM OUT IN THE FEARS, AND CLAMOURS, AND REMORSE OF CONSCIENCE. Remorse is remorseless. Like fire, it burns all around it. No man can protect himself against his sins flashing him in the face at any moment. The Bible, preaching, singing, praying, a marriage, a trial in court, the sight of the man he has injured, or one that looks like him, or anything may arouse his conscience into fury at the most inconvenient time.

IV. BUT EVEN IF ONE ESCAPE ALL THESE THINGS, YET IF HE DIES UNPARDONED HIS SINS WILL FIND HIM OUT IN THE NEXT WORLD (Luke xii. 2; 1 Tim. v. 24; Eccles. x. 20). Why do not men admit the force of these truths, and act accordingly? The reasons are very clear.

1. Some think their sins will not find them out because God has not yet called them to account (Eccles. viii. 11). Such men forget that with the Lord one day is "as a thousand years," &c. (2 Pet. iii. 8-10).
2. In this world sinners often forget their sins, and think God has also forgotten them (Psa. x. 11). But God forgets nothing.
3. Some think their sin will not find them out because they doubt whether God is holy and just, and whether He takes notice of human actions (Psa. xciv. 5-7). But that is practical atheism (Prov. xv. 3; Eccles. xii. 14).
4. Some think their sin will not find them out because God is merciful. But mercy rejected can save no man. All the cooling fountains can do no good to him who does not drink of them. Oh, sinner, "be sure your sin will find you out." You may now live in ease and in error. You may now harden your heart in pride. But you must meet your sins at God's tribunal. Remember that. Oh! be wise—be wise unto salvation. (*W. S. Plumer, D.D.*)

*Avoiding the mischief of wrongdoing:—*I. OUR SIN WILL CERTAINLY FIND US OUT. Some men indeed are so hardened in wickedness, so totally lost to conscience and reflection, that they are long able to hide themselves, as it were, from sin. Such persons may live long before their sin finds them out. It must wait for opportunities—a time of sickness or a time of distress, when a man's wickedness has drawn some heavy calamity upon him. Then his sin will be sure to find him out. It will hold up a frightful mirror before him, and show him that himself has been the cause of all he suffers.

II. Sin being thus represented as a merciless creditor, of an unforgiving temper, demanding debts with the utmost rigour, LET US SEE HOW WE MAY BEST AVOID THE MISCHIEF IT THREATENS.

I. As we are assured in the text that our sin will certainly find us out, it is the part of wisdom to be beforehand with it and find it out first. Sin can never find us out but at some great disadvantage—when it is strong and we are weak; when habits of wickedness have been formed, and we have suffered some mischief from them; or when our spirits are low, and we feel the world sinking under us. But on the other hand, if we take the active part, and endeavour to find out sin first, we prevent this bad effect. It is in this case as in others of the same kind. If we are in debt, our debts, that is, our creditors, will find us out. But when we are beforehand, and find out our debts ourselves, and take methods to pay them, we avoid all the bad consequences we should otherwise incur. He who can number a few figures may count his debts. They are, or may be, plain before him. But the deceit and treachery of the heart lie deep; and it is often a difficult matter to come at our sins.

The case is this: we not only suffer our passions and appetites to lead us into sin, but we use our reason, which God has given us for better purposes, to excuse our wickedness. Repentance is the grand condition of the gospel; and the first act of repentance is to find out our sins. When we think of Zaccheus, let us remember the happy fruits of finding out our sin. When we think of Judas Iscariot, let us tremble at the dreadful consequences of suffering it to find us out. 2. Being thus convinced of the necessity of finding out our sin, the next great step to be taken is to endeavour to obtain pardon for it. Whatever difficulty there may be amidst the many corruptions and doublings of our hearts in finding out our sins, the method of obtaining pardon lies plain before us. 3. Since, then, God Almighty hath thus put the means of our salvation, in a manner, in our own power, by leaving us at option whether we will accept or not the terms He hath offered; let us not be so lost to ourselves as to go on in any sinful course till at length our sin find us out, but let us manfully endeavour to find it out first. Infidelity, where proper means of obtaining evidence has been neglected, is certainly a high offence. (*W. Gilpin, M.A.*)

The sinner detected:—I. THAT YOU HAVE SINNED AGAINST THE LORD. 1. This is abundantly evident from innumerable passages of Scripture. 2. From observation of the conduct of mankind, it is evident that they have sinned against the Lord. 3. From the many dreadful threatenings which are written in the Word of God. 4. This is evident from all the judgments which God hath brought upon the children of men from the beginning of the world until now. 5. From the consent of all nations, it is evident that we have sinned against the Lord. II. *How YOUR SIN WILL FIND YOU OUT.* It will find you out for your conviction and conversion, or for your condemnation and destruction. 1. Your sin will find you out at the bar of conscience, under the dispensation of the gospel of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2. Under afflictive dispensations of Divine Providence. 3. At the approach of the king of terrors. 4. Your sins, if you die impenitent, will find you out at the tribunal of Christ, in the judgment of the great day. 5. The sins of the impenitent will find them out in hell, to all the ages of eternity. III. *THE ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY THAT SOONER OR LATER YOUR SINS WILL FIND YOU OUT.* 1. That men's sins shall find them out is absolutely certain, because the nature and perfections of God require it. 2. The Word of God asserts it. 3. Conscience forebodes it. 4. God's moral government attests it. 5. Those who have gone before, in every past age of the world and period of the Church, in their experience have found it. *CONCLUSION.* 1. Be sure to find out sin. 2. Find out your sin, so as to get a soul-humbling and a heart-breaking view of it. 3. Endeavour to find out your sins in such a manner as shall influence you to make a free confession of them unto the Lord. 4. Be so stirred up by finding out your sins as to implore forgiveness from God through the merit and intercession of His Son Jesus Christ. 5. Be excited to wash in the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. 6. Endeavour to find out your sin, and to be so affected with the sight of it as to forsake it and flee from it in time to come. (*John Jardine.*)

*Unhelpfulness:—*What the text teaches is not merely that harm done to others will recoil on the head of the wrong-doer, but that help withheld will do the same. It assumes that our brethren have a right to positive assistance at our hands. And it solemnly warns us that if we deny them that assistance, our sin will find us out. I. *TAKE THE CASE OF A PARENT WHO NEGLECTS THE CHRISTIAN NURTURE OF HIS CHILDREN.* He allows them, suppose, to grow up uneducated, sending them to work when they should be at school, and preferring the petty earnings they bring him to their mental and moral well-being. Or he allows them to take up with dangerous companions, without making any effort to restrain them. Or, though not unheedful of their physical comfort and intellectual culture, he neglects to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. What is the almost certain issue? Does this negligent parent receive from his children honour, love, obedience, cheerful help? Or if he does obtain some measure of deference while they are of tender years, and dwell under his roof, what happens when they become grown men and women, and he an old man in need of sympathy and aid? Alas! the cold indifference with which they then regard him, the grudging parsimony with which, if he is poor, they contribute to his scanty maintenance, the shame and sorrow which they bring on his grey hairs by their ingratitude and wickedness—these things but too surely prove that his sin has entailed an answerable punishment. II. *TAKE THE CASE OF THOSE RICH MEMBERS OF A COMMUNITY WHO NEGLECT TO PROVIDE INSTRUCTION FOR THE UNTAUGHT CHILDREN OF THE POOR.* In the cost of the crimes which those unheeded ones begin in youth, and perpetrate with aggravations in riper years, their sin is finding them out. In the cost of police and prisons

and heavy poor-rates, it is finding them out. In the organised and protracted strikes, which reveal the crass ignorance and pitiable credulity of their dupes, and threaten to palsy the industrial enterprise of the country, it is finding them out. And should a season of wild political excitement or of widespread commercial stagnation arrive, with its provocations to turbulence and lawlessness, it may find them out in a way yet more terribly retributive. III. TAKE THE CASE OF A CORPORATION OR A COMMUNITY WHICH DECLINES OR DELAYS TO ADOPT MEASURES OF SANITARY IMPROVEMENT. It is sad to think that the majority of men are without a conscience as regards the violation of physical laws, though that is as truly a sin against God as their violation of moral laws. But whether men are alive to their guilt in this respect or not, certain it is that their sin is in hot pursuit of them, and will ere long seize and rend them with its deadly fangs. The prosperous inhabitants of a town cannot suffer their poorer neighbours to dwell in overcrowded and unwholesome tenements, without having themselves to smart for such selfish neglect. If the poor are tempted, amid their physical discomforts, to resort to the deceitful solace of intemperance, it must fall to the rest of the community to pay for the pauperism and crime which intemperance begets. If the poor are ruined in health and made reckless in habits by the scenes of filth and vice which environ them, it must fall to those in better circumstances to sustain the burdens and hazards which an idle and turbulent populace never fail to create. And when fever or pestilence breaks out in the squalid hovel, who shall guarantee the health of the sumptuous mansion? IV. TAKE THE CASE OF A CHRISTIAN CHURCH WHICH NEGLECTS TO ADOPT AGGRESSIVE MEASURES FOR THE RECLAMATION OF THE IRRELIGIOUS MULTITUDES AROUND IT. Every successive year adds to the numbers who never enter a house of prayer. And now, instead of the grand moral spectacle which our working-men once presented—men humble in station, but high in moral excellence; scant of secular lore, but mighty in the Scriptures—we behold throngs of workmen who are not only indifferent about religion, but positively profane and sceptical. Bespeaks not this a lack of aggressive effort on the part of our churches and congregations? Could there be now such a vast outlying mass of irreligion, had each of our churches, in place of abiding within its own pasturage, gone over the river to help those neglected ones in their combat with evil? And shall not this sin find the churches out? It is finding them out. Already are there thousands upon thousands in our land who hate every Christian Church with a perfect hatred, and who would shout with diabolic triumph over their destruction. (*J. M. McCulloch, D.D.*)

Our sins finding us out:—1. First, our sins find us out when there is a direct connection of cause and effect between the sin and the punishment, and in the most literal sense of the word, we eat the fruit of our own doings. The *delirium tremens* which overtakes the drunkard, the premature decrepitude or forlorn old age of him who has laid waste his youth by sensual excesses, the rags with which the sluggard is clothed, the shameful fall which so often the proud prepares for himself, what are all these but men's sins finding them out, the sin having all along been big with the punishment, and in due season bringing it forth—according to our own proverb, “Old sin, new shame,” old and new being linked with one another by indissoluble bonds, and sooner or later making this relation between them to appear? 2. But not in this way only do men's sins find them out. Oftentimes there is no such connection of cause and effect; but there is that conformity between the sin and the punishment, that unmistakable resemblance between them, which it is impossible to ascribe to blind chance. Scripture, and not Scripture only, is full of examples in this kind. It is measured to men exactly as they have measured to others; the very cup they have held to the lips of others being by and by held to their own. The deceiver is deceived; the violator of the sanctities of another man's home beholds his own trampled on and violated in turn. The wicked king, that slew the prophets and left their very bodies unburied, is himself slain and cast forth with the burial of an ass. So marvellous is the conformity between the sin and the suffering, that there is wrung from the sufferer, sometimes in the hearing of all the world, but oh! how much oftener in the secret of his soul, a confession of the same: “As I have done, so God hath requited me” (*Judg. i. 7; Rev. xvi. 6*). Others may miss the connection, may not so much as guess that there is one; but he knows only too well whose hand it was that smote him; from what wing the arrow which pierced him has been drawn. 3. Then, too, men's sins often find them out, though no visible sign or token may betray this fact to the world. All may outwardly stand fair; there may be no breach in the worldly prosperity, nay, this may be ampler, more strongly established than

ever; while yet there may be that within which forbids to rejoice, which takes all the joy and the gladness out of life—the memory of that old sin which was as nothing when committed, but which now darkens all, the deadly arrow poisoning the springs of life, which will not drop from the side, which no force, no art of man's device, can withdraw. Is there not here one whose sin has found him out? Neither let us assume that it is only the wicked whose sins thus come round to them again. God is faithful, and will not allow His own children to escape altogether, any more than the children of this present world. The cup of suffering may be filled more fully for some than for others; but it shall come round in due time to all. 4. What shall we say to all this? If earlier or later, first or last, our sins do thus so often overtake us even here, shall we not put far from us so evil a thing and one which has such a fatal power of thus coming back on him that wrought it? It may be that it is too late for this; but there is still something which we *can* do. We can, so to speak, take the initiative; turn the table on our sins, and instead of waiting for them to find us out, we, earnestly seeking, by aid of that candle which the Lord has lighted in us, may find out them; and then we have the sure word of promise that, if we will judge ourselves, we shall not be judged of the Lord. (*Archbp. Trench.*)

Sin its own punishment:—The consequences of a man's sin are often, and for a length of time, felt by others rather than himself. The anxious husband has to bear the burden laid on him by the thriftless wife; the widowed mother that which is imposed by the extravagance of the thoughtless son. The sin, so to speak, born into life, leaves its proper parent, travels sometimes far away, finds out the innocent, and afflicts them; but nevertheless, in due time, it will come home to the sinner himself. I. Here was the sin of SELFISHNESS. "Bring us not over Jordan." A deliberate proposal, involving schism in the body, separation, isolation, to carry out mean and selfish ends. Suppose this request had been granted; though things might have gone well with them for a time, yet in the end, cut off by their own act from sympathy and aid, exposed to the attack of numerous foes, they would have reaped the bitter fruit of what they had sown: and so throughout life, no one more fails of his end, no one more certainly brings on himself what he seeks to avoid, than the selfish man. II. The sin of COWARDICE, too, was probably here. Timorousness provoked insult, and invites attack. III. Here was the sin of INDOLENCE. Nothing more certainly than indolence cuts itself off from the ease and enjoyment it seeks. Its grows, too, so strong by yielding to it, that at length freedom from toil ends in bitter bondage. IV. Here was THAT IN WHICH ALL OTHER SINS MAY BE SUMMED UP: DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD. (*J. W. Lance.*)

The unfailing detective:—The sinner and his sin change places after he has committed it. Before its commission he pursues sin; after its perpetration sin pursues him, and is sure to find him. I. WHY? 1. Because of the absolute perfectness of God's law, which covers every detail of a human being's life, and threatens a penalty for every dereliction. 2. Because of the perfect administration of that law, which notes every offence and secures the punishment of every offender. II. WHEN? 1. Sometimes in this life, by civil law, by general censure, and by reproaches of conscience. 2. Sometimes at death, when the hallucination of the world is removed, and conscience asserts its authority. 3. Always at the judgment, when Satan no longer can deceive, when the standard of duty is applied, and the sinner's record is unfolded. In the Hades of the lost, where the sinner shall reap in kind, in degree, and in quantity what he has sown. (*Hon. Monthly.*)

The certainty of sin finding us out:—I. WHAT IS MEANT BY OUR SIN FINDING US OUT? 1. By the expression "Our sin," we may in the first place understand any particular sin of which we may have been guilty; any gross and single act of injustice, profaneness, licentiousness, falsehood, or the like, which at any time may have been committed by us. But we must not confine the expression to this meaning; for it more properly signifies all the collective sin of which we have been guilty; the sin, as it were, of our whole lives. 2. Now, in what sense is it said that this our sin will find us out? To understand the force of this expression, we must remember that sin necessarily brings certain evil consequences. It entails them on the sinner. Now these consequences are three: fear, shame, and death. Sin necessarily brings these evils with it in its train. "Evil pursues sinners"; and whatever they may think or feel, their sin will one day find them out. II. THE CERTAINTY THAT OUR SIN WILL FIND US OUT. 1. In the first place, the perfections of God absolutely forbid that sin should go unpunished. Omnipresent: Omniscient: Holy: Just. True and faithful to His word. 2. In the second place, the many remarkable instances of sin being detected and punished in this world, strongly

confirm the truth under consideration. Achan: Gehazi: Ananias and Sapphira. Has it not sometimes happened, that a man has even become his own accuser? Unable to bear the clamours and stings of conscience, he has confessed his own guilt, and has given himself up to punishment. Now what do these things prove, but that God will certainly bring to light the hidden things of darkness? We see how easily He can do it. He thus directs sin to find out some sinners here, to convince us that it will find out every sinner hereafter. 3. But, in the third place, should a doubt yet remain on our minds, the appointment of a day of final retribution may and must entirely remove it. (*E. Cooper, M.A.*) *Retribution*:—1. Does not common sense tell us, that if God made this world, and governs it by righteous and God-like laws, this must be a world in which evil doing cannot thrive? God made the world better than that, surely! He would be a bad law-giver who made such laws, that it was as well to break them as to keep them. The world works by God's laws, and it inclines towards good and not towards evil; and he who sins, even in the least, acts contrary to the rule and constitution of the world, and will surely find that God's laws will go on in spite of him, and grind him to powder. God has no need to go out of His way to punish our evil deeds. Let them alone, and they will punish themselves. Is it not so in everything? If a tradesman trades badly, or a farmer farms badly, there is no need of lawyers to punish him; he will punish himself. 2. Next, to speak of Scripture. I might quote texts innumerable to prove that what I say Scripture says also. 3. You know that your sins will find you out. Look boldly and honestly into your own hearts. Look through the history of your past lives, and confess to God, at least, that the far greater number of your sorrows have been your own fault; that there is hardly a day's misery which you ever endured in your life of which you might not say, "If I had listened to the voice of God in my conscience—if I had earnestly considered what my duty was—if I had prayed to God to determine my judgment right, I should have been spared this sorrow now!" Am I not right? Think again of your past lives, and answer in God's sight, how many wrong things have you ever done which have succeeded—that is, how many sins which you would not be right glad were undone if you could but put back the wheels of Time? They may have succeeded outwardly; meanness will succeed so—lies—oppression—theft—godlessness—they are all pleasant enough while they last, I suppose: and a man may reap what he calls substantial benefits from them in money, and such-like, and keep that safe enough; but has his sin succeeded? Has it not found him out? found him out never to lose him again? Is he the happier for it? 4. And lastly, you who, without running into any especial sins, as those which the world calls sins, still live careless about religion, without loyalty to Christ the Lord, without any honest attempt, or even wish, to serve the God above you, or to rejoice in remembering that you are His children, working for Him, and under Him—be sure your sin will find you out. When affliction, or sickness, or disappointment come, as come they will if God has not cast you off; when the dark day dawns, and your fool's paradise of worldly prosperity is cut away from under your feet, then you will find out your folly; you will find that you have insulted the only friend who can bring you out of affliction. Then, I say, the sin of your godlessness will find you out; if you do not intend to fall, soured and sickened merely by God's chastisements, either into stupid despair or peevish discontent, you will have to go back to God and cry, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son." Go back at once, before it be too late. Find out your sins and mend them—before they find you out, and break your hearts. (*C. Kingsley, M.A.*) *The warning against sin*:—One thing which has much to do with leading people to commit sin, is the thought that they can do it in secret, and not be found out. Many a boy is tempted to play truant, instead of going to school, because he thinks that his father and mother will never know anything about it. Many a robber breaks into a house at night, and steals what he wants, because he thinks that no one sees him, and so his sin will never be found out. But here in our text, we have a warning against sin because it is sure to be found out. I. And the first thing which must make it sure that sin will be found out, is—THE PRESENCE OF GOD. II. The second thing which makes it sure that sin will be found out, is—THE POWER OF GOD. III. And the third thing, which makes it sure that sin will be found out is—THE PURPOSE OF GOD (*Eccles. xii. 14*). (*R. Newton, D.D.*) *Murder will out*:—I. THE COMMON FAULT. In every human being there are two sides, one seen by the world, and the other known only to himself and God. We perform before our fellow men; but to ourselves and God, one's true

character is revealed. Few men and women commit great crimes. But people who commit great crimes first begin with the little faults, such as "white lies," or "white dishonesty," or "white speculation," with other people's money. You know how hard it is sometimes to heat anything in your oven or on your fire; but when you obtain the first degree of heat, it is much more easy to get the second, the third, and the fourth. So it is hard at first to prevail upon yourself to do wrong, but after the first step has been taken it is very easy to go on with the second and the third. Dalliance with sin is a common fault. II. THE SURE RESULT—"Be sure your sin will find you out." When sin has found you out, you often resolve to give it up, yet you go to it again. Many people forsake sin as a man who goes to his work forsakes his house, but comes to it again after a season. And your sin finds you out in that you keep on doing the wrong, each year consenting to neglect something good, and more pleased to do something evil. Your sin finds you out because as rust destroys your iron tools and vessels, so sin rusts your inward character. A splendid oak tree is blown down in a great gale of wind. But was it the wind that ruined the monarch of the forest? No; the wind merely completed the ruin. The cause of the destruction began years ago, when a drop of water settled itself in a crevice of the oak tree and gradually worked its way within until ultimately the rain and the outside air got into the heart of the wood, and it became diseased, corrupt, and hollow. So when we see a man fall, we know it is a cankering and corrupting sin which has been surely finding him out. Sin will surely find you out because it is opposed to God's eternal law of right. III. Thank God, there is a CURE FOR SIN; but no outward salve can heal its wounds. No external restraint, no prison, no muzzle of human device will keep you from it; the only cure is a new creation in your heart; and this God promises to every human heart that asks it. God cures us of our sin-disease, not only effectually but with tenderness. (*W. Birch.*) *The entail of evil*:—I. Notice the fact that this appeal, in regard to a great spiritual truth, is not made in the first instance to individuals, BUT TO TWO TRIBES IN THEIR NATIONAL CAPACITY. The life of a tribe, or of a people, is a reality. A tribe, a nation, a Church, a people, cannot commit a wrong act or follow a wrong course, without, as a tribe, or nation, or Church, or people, suffering the consequences of its act. The sin which a nation commits is found out in the long-run. It brings forth its own natural fruits. One generation is to the next generation as spring is to autumn, and as boyhood is to manhood. And just as a man suffers for his carelessness, his folly, his dissipation, in youth, so does a generation suffer for its predecessors. II. We may make the subject one of wider and more general application, and find that THIS SAYING IS UNIVERSALLY TRUE. 1. By the very constitution of man's being, the sin of the individual who commits a wrong reappears in his own mind and character. Not only every act, but every thought or purpose or desire which passes through the mind, gives a tinge to the mind itself. In the attitude and character of the mind itself, every man's individual sins, even the most secret, will find him out. 2. There may be some who will be more influenced by another consideration, and that is, that his secret sins will grow and gather, until in some way or other they will discover themselves in act, and find him out. (*A. Watson, D.D.*) *The sinner found out by his sin*:—Both the unconverted who resist not evil, and the converted who resist it but imperfectly, not aiming at the total renewal of their nature, offer a parallel case of guilt to that of the unbelieving Israelites. And we are now to examine how the warning of the text appears to each class—"Be sure your sin will find you out." I. Now we suppose that the delusion which chiefly hardens the sinner in the commission of the crimes he so daringly perpetrates, is THE HOPE THAT HE MAY COMMIT THEM IN SECRECY AND WITH IMPUNITY. There can be no doubt that if detection followed immediately on the commission of crime—night throwing no mantle of darkness round the culprit, and accomplices unable to screen him from public scorn—those monstrous forms of wickedness would not so often appear which disfigure the annals of our race. But such a speedy retribution would go counter to the whole tone and texture of the revealed plan of salvation. Sins punished as soon as committed cannot be repented of, and therefore cannot be pardoned. If then, long-suffering is to be shown, if remission of human guilt is to be proclaimed through the interposition of a Mediator, judgment must not follow so speedily upon crime. And it is this delay, rendered necessary for the display of mercy, that men interpret as if it meant indifference. We must, therefore, fling open the mysterious portals that enclose the future world, and reveal to the gaze of the sinner the destinies of the lost, ere we can hope successfully to urge him to commence the great business of religion.

Who among you is deluding himself by the hope either of secrecy or impunity? "Be sure your sin will find you out!" You are pursued by the sin which yourselves have committed! That which before had no being, has received an individual, a personal existence by your own act, and is afterwards mysteriously connected with you, following your footsteps and tracking you in all your journeyings. Nay more, each sin which ye commit may be said to swell the numbers of the throng of pursuers that are behind, making it less possible for you to escape. Noiselessly they follow you. And ye yourselves have witnessed some of the results that follow on the sinner being overtaken by his sins. For what is it but sin finding the sensualist out, when he sinks beneath the ravages of premature decay, a virtual suicide? What is it but sin finding the gambler out, when with tottering reason and broken fortunes he finds a dishonourable grave, bequeathing nothing but an unhonoured name to those who once called him husband and father? And what is it but sin finding the dishonest trader out when, though he once stood high in public estimation, his reputation and his gains are proved to have been alike unfairly won, and he is sent an exile from scenes where he once moved a king? Happy for him if these temporal calamities, which are but heralds of others more fearful, would drive him to take refuge beneath the Saviour's Cross, while yet the avenger has not fastened on his soul. If the sinner passes through life with his future tormentors always on his track, how can he, if found among the impenitent, hope to escape? But the text contains indirect notices of the future life which need a fuller examination. I gather that there will be an exact adaptation between the crime and its punishment—the punishment being nothing else than the crime itself re-appearing in another state of being to take vengeance on him who committed it. II. But we must now proceed to the second point we proposed to examine, **HOW THE TEXT MAY BE APPLIED TO THE CASE OF ONE WHO IS TRULY A CHILD OF GOD.** The believer who stands at God's bar, having squared his conduct when on earth, according to God's commandment, for Christ's sake, shall not come under any measure of condemnation. If pronounced righteous then, his justification will be complete. But is he never impeded in his Christian course by the habits he had formed while living "without God in the world"? Those habits are gradually being overcome by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The roots of that sin, not yet eradicated, send up their bitter fruit, even when the sin itself has long disappeared. And thus his former sin, though pardoned, finds the believer out. Nor is this all. Sin will mark the believer's course all through, and greater infirmities will appear in one than in another. There may be spiritual indolence—a desire to pass lightly over some infirmity, as if it did no great violence to God's law—a fixing of the heart on something which forthwith becomes an idol, excluding Jehovah from His proper place. And then this sin finds the believer out. The child, or the husband, or the friend, who was too much loved, is taken away, that nothing may interfere with the total surrender of the soul to God. Or the uninterrupted prosperity which caused a forgetfulness that "all things come of God," is brought suddenly to an end, and the storm sweeps over the stream of life which before flowed calmly along, that God's voice may be heard bidding the tempest subside. Oh! the believer should never feel the rod, without searching for the sin that brings the chastening. I am sure that God keeps a stricter reckoning, in this world, with the righteous, than with the ungodly. (*J. P. Waldo, M.A.*)

Our sin finding us out :—Audley was an old English usurer, who used to lend money to the thoughtless young men of his day, at ruinous rates of interest. He counted out the pounds for them, with many well-affected remonstrances on their extravagance, but his pity never led him away so far as to make him forget his securities. As long as he knew a debt to be safe, he was quite indifferent as to delay of payment, and many an unsuspecting victim was lulled into false security by the old usurer's apparent unconcern; and they were only awakened, on some dark and unfortunate day, by the terrible discovery that interest and principal had swallowed up all their estates. Such is the ruinous percentage which thousands will be called on to pay to the great Enemy of Souls, for what are commonly described as "the pleasures of sin." There is a presumption on the part of such as wilfully disobey God, which, sooner or later, will receive its due recompense. The most dangerous and deadly quality of sin is its deceitfulness: so deceitful, indeed, that it can conceal itself even from conscience. But nothing can be hidden from God. Hundreds of well-authenticated facts have occurred in all ages, enforcing the declaration that sin will be sure to find out the guilty. Even if sin be undiscovered in this life, the appointment of the great day of retribution, at the last, puts the matter of final

exposure beyond the possibility of doubt. (J. N. Norton, D.D.) *Sin's detection and punishment*.—I. Let us notice the emphatic expression, "your sin." There are shades of moral character, and some sins are of deeper dye than others. There are sins peculiarly characteristic of some people. It is important that we should inquire what is our sin—the sin that is more especially peculiar to any of us. Your sin is that which is most agreeable in its commission to your circumstances and constitutional temperament—that sin which you can commit with the greatest facility, and against which you have the least power of offering resistance—that sin for which you study to find out the most plausible excuses. What is the cause of your carelessness as regards your spiritual and eternal condition? That cause, whatever it may be, is your sin. II. Let us now consider the CERTAIN DETECTION AND PUNISHMENT OF SIN. It has often been remarked that "murder will out." Blood has a voice which will make itself heard sooner or later. The blood of the first victim of violence cried from the ground on which it was shed, and it appealed to the God of justice in heaven for vengeance. Let us watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation. The young are especially exposed to danger from pride and vanity: let them guard against the beginnings of sin. (S. Walker.) *Concealment of sin no security to the sinner*.—I. THAT MEN GENERALLY, IF NOT ALWAYS, PROCEED TO THE COMMISSION OF SIN, UPON A SECRET CONFIDENCE OF CONCEALMENT OR IMPUNITY. 1. That no man is induced to sin, considered in itself, as a thing absolutely or merely evil, but as it bears some resemblance or appearance of good in the apprehensions of him who commits it. 2. The other assertion to be laid down is, that God has annexed two great evils to every sin, in opposition to the pleasure and profit of it; to wit, shame and pain. He has, by an eternal and most righteous decree, made these two the inseparable effects and consequents of sin. They are the wages assigned it by the laws of Heaven; so that whosoever commits it, ought to account shame and punishment to belong to him as his rightful inheritance. II. THE GROUNDS AND REASONS UPON WHICH MEN TAKE UP SUCH A CONFIDENCE. And, no doubt, weak and shallow enough we shall find them all; and such as could never persuade any man to sin, did not his own love to sin persuade him much more forcibly than all such considerations; some of which are these that follow. As—1. Men consider the success which they have actually had in the commission of many sins; and this proves an encouraging argument to them to commit the same for the future; as naturally suggesting this to their thoughts, that what they have done so often, without either discovery or punishment, may be so done by them again. 2. A second ground, upon which men are apt to persuade themselves that they shall escape the stroke of Divine justice for their sins, is their observation of the great and flourishing condition of some of the topping sinners of the world. 3. As we have shown how mightily men are heartened on to their sins, by the successful examples of others as bad as themselves or perhaps worse; so the next ground upon which such are wont to promise themselves security, both from the discovery and punishment of their sins, is the opinion which they have of their own singular art and cunning to conceal them from the knowledge, or, at least, of their power to rescue them from the jurisdiction of any earthly judge. 4. The fourth and last ground which I shall mention of men's promising themselves security from the punishment of their sins, is a strong presumption that they shall be able to repent, and make their peace with God when they please; and this, they fully reckon, will keep them safe, and effectually shut the door against their utmost fears, as being a reach beyond them all. III. TO SHOW THE VANITY OF THIS CONFIDENCE, by declaring those several ways by which, in the issue, it comes certainly to be defeated; and that both with reference to this world and the next. 1. For this world; there are various ways by which it comes to be disappointed here: as (1) The very confidence itself of secrecy is a direct and natural cause of the sinner's discovery. For confidence in such cases causes a frequent repetition of the same action; and if a man does a thing frequently, it is odds but some time or other he is discovered; for by this he subjects himself to so many more accidents; every one of which may possibly betray him. He who has escaped in many battles, has yet been killed in the issue; and by playing too often in the mouth of death has been snapped by it at last. Add to this, that confidence makes a man venturesome, and venturesomeness casts him into the high road of danger and the very arms of destruction. For while a man ventures, he properly shuts the eyes of his reason. And he who shuts his own eyes lies so much the more open to those of other men. (2) There is sometimes a strange, providential concurrence of unusual, unlikely accidents, for the discovery of great sins; a villainy committed perhaps but once in an age, comes sometimes to be found out also by such an acci-

dent as scarce happens above once in an age. (3) God sometimes makes one sin the means of discovering another; it often falling out with two vices, as with two thieves or rogues; of whom it is hard to say which is worse, and yet one of them may serve well enough to betray and find out the other. How many have by their drunkenness disclosed their thefts, their lusts, and murders, which might have been buried in perpetual silence, had not the sottish committers of them buried their reason in their cups? For the tongue is then got loose from its obedience to reason, and commanded at all adventures by the fumes of a distempered brain and a roving imagination; and so presently pours forth whatsoever they shall suggest to it, sometimes casting away life, fortune, reputation, and all in a breath. (4) God sometimes infatuates and strikes the sinner with frenzy, and such a distraction, as causes him to reveal all his hidden baseness, and to blab out such truths as will be sure to be revenged upon him who speaks them. In a word, God blasts and takes away his understanding, for having used it so much to the dishonour of Him who gave it; and delivers him over to a sort of madness, too black and criminal to be allowed any refuge in Bedlam. (5) God sometimes lets loose the sinner's conscience upon him, filling it with such horror for sin, as renders it utterly unable to bear the burden it labours under, without publishing, or rather proclaiming it to the world. (6) And lastly, God sometimes takes the work of vengeance upon Himself, and immediately, with His own arm, repays the sinner by some notable judgment from heaven; sometimes, perhaps, He strikes him dead suddenly; and sometimes He smites him with some loathsome disease (which will hardly be thought the gout, whatsoever it may be called); and sometimes, again, He strangely blasts him in his name, family, or estate, so that all about him stand amazed at the blow: but God and the sinner himself know well enough the reason and the meaning of it too. Justice, we know, used to be pictured blind, and therefore it finds out the sinner, not with its eyes, but with its hands; not by seeing, but by striking; and it is the honour of the great attribute of God's justice, which He thinks so much concerned, to give some pledge or specimen of itself upon bold sinners in this world; and so to assure them of a full payment hereafter, by paying them something in the way of earnest here. (*R. South, D.D.*)

The consequences of sin:—The text leads us to consider the consequences of a single sin, such as a breach of their engagement would have been to the Reubenites and Gadites. I. It is natural to reflect on THE PROBABLE INFLUENCE UPON US OF SINS COMMITTED IN OUR CHILDHOOD AND EVEN INFANCY, WHICH WE NEVER REALISED OR HAVE ALTOGETHER FORGOTTEN. Children's minds are impressible in a very singular way, such as is not common afterwards. The passing occurrences which meet them rest upon their imagination as if they had duration, and days or hours, having to them the semblance, may do the work, of years. II. What is true in infancy and childhood is in ITS DEGREE TRUE IN AFTER-LIFE. At particular moments in our later life, when the mind is excited, thrown out of its ordinary state, as if into the original unformed state when it was more free to choose good or evil, then, in like manner, it takes impressions, and those indelible ones, after the manner of childhood. This is one reason why a time of trial is often such a crisis in a man's spiritual history. III. TO THESE SINGLE OR FORGOTTEN SINS ARE NOT IMPROBABLY TO BE TRACED THE STRANGE INCONSISTENCIES OF CHARACTER WHICH WE OFTEN WITNESS IN OUR EXPERIENCE OF LIFE. IV. Single sins indulged or neglected are often THE CAUSE OF OTHER DEFECTS OF CHARACTER, WHICH SEEM TO HAVE NO CONNECTION WITH THEM, but which, after all, are rather symptomatic of the former than themselves at the bottom of the mischief. V. A MAN MAY BE VERY RELIGIOUS IN ALL BUT ONE INFIRMITY, AND THIS ONE INDULGED INFIRMITY MAY PRODUCE MOST DISASTROUS EFFECTS ON HIS SPIRITUAL STATE, WITHOUT HIS EVER BEING AWARE OF IT. His religious excellences are of no avail against wilful sin. The word of Scripture assures us that such sin shuts us out from God's presence and obstructs the channels by which He gives us grace. (*J. H. Newman, D.D.*) *The sins of sinners finding them out:*—I. SINNERS ARE IN THEIR HEARTS UTTERLY AVERSE TO BE FOUND OUT BY THEIR SINS, AND THEY HAVE MANY SHIFTS FOR THAT VAIN PURPOSE. 1. They will excuse and justify their sins as if there were no evil in them. 2. They will carry the matter so quietly as that it shall be hid from the eyes of the world, while in the meantime God's watchful eye is still upon them, though they do not regard it. 3. They will deny it when charged upon them, and so cover one sin with another. "They wipe their mouth and say we have done no wickedness." Oh what pains do many take to ruin their own souls. Credit before the world is bought at prodigious rates of soul, and consciences, lies, and perjury. 4. They will keep out of the way, where their sin is most likely to find them out. They live strangers

to themselves, dare not examine themselves impartially. II. To show in what respects sin shall find out the sinner. 1. By discovering and bringing to light their works of darkness. 2. By presenting sin in its native colours to their awakened consciences. 3. By giving them the due reward of their works. III. Show whence it is that sin certainly will find out the sinner. How can it be otherwise, if we consider—1. That none can sin without witnesses, who will surely at length discover the sin. Let sinners choose the most secret place for their works of darkness, they have always two witnesses present with them. (1) Conscience within their own breast is as a thousand witnesses, whose testimony one cannot get denied. (2) The omniscient God, whose eye is always upon the sinner. 2. God has said it. 3. There is a watchful eye of Providence over the world that never closes, but takes notice of all men's actions at all times and in every place. Use 1. Of information. This lets us see—(1) That an evil conscience is a sad companion, and guilt lying within the breast unrepented of will break out sadly at length, to the sinner's confusion. Many a secret blow it gives the sinner, that the world knows not of. (2) God is a just God, and will not be mocked, nor can He be blinded. Use 2. Of warning. (1) To take heed when you think you stand, lest you fall. The way of sin is down the hill, it is easy to go downward, but there may be broken bones before you get up again. (2) Please not yourselves in that you get your sins covered and hid from the eyes of men. For though you may prosper a while in that course, yet your feet may slip at last. (3) Let us all labour to find out our sins, lest they find us out. To inquire more particularly than we have yet done into the Lord's making sin find out the sinner. This is one of these things in which the providence of God does shine most illustriously; upon which unbiassed spectators must say, "This is the finger of God, and verily there is a God to judge upon the earth." Consider here, I. THE GENERAL KINDS OF SIN, WHICH THE LORD MAKES TO FIND OUT THE SINNER. As for open sins confessed by the sinner, I need not speak of these, the sinner meets with them every day. But—1. Sins which men will not own to be sins, the Lord makes to find out the sinner. Crucifixion of Christ. 2. Secret sins to which no man is witness, the Lord makes them find out the sinner. II. THE TIME IN WHICH THE LORD MAKES SIN TO FIND OUT THE SINNER. Times and seasons are in the Lord's hand, and the time fixed by His providence is always the best time, and whose considereth circumstances will be obliged to own it. The best time for his own honour, and for the conviction of the sinner in mercy or in wrath. III. THE PLACE, WHERE SIN FINDS OUT THE SINNER. Many times there is much of God seen in this, and God reserves the discovery always to the fittest place. And He can make the sinner's own feet carry him to the place of this heavy meeting, while he has no mind of any such thing. 1. God can make sin find out the sinner sometimes, where he can have least support under the awful meeting with his sin. Joseph's brethren. 2. Where they may have least help to shift, their sins finding them out. Companions in sin are oftentimes farthest to seek when their help is most needed, and some time or other they will all prove physicians of no value. 3. Where it will confound the sinner most and pierce his heart most keenly. God makes secret sins, which no eye has seen committed, find out the sinner publicly before many witnesses, and in the face of the sun. IV. THE MEANS BY WHICH THE LORD MAKES SIN FIND OUT THE SINNER. There is much of God seen in this also. He never wants means to discover the most secret sins, which He wishes to bring to light. Sometimes this is done—1. By the natural product of the sin, by which the sin is made to discover itself. 2. By some act of indiscretion and folly in the sinner himself. 3. By some unforeseen accident which the sinner by his own utmost diligence could not prevent. Man's capacity is but narrow, there are many things which he cannot foresee. When he goes out of the way of God, he may, ere he be aware, be caught fast in such a snare as will hold him till his sin finds him out. V. THE WAY AND MANNER OF SIN'S FINDING OUT THE SINNER. This many a time is such as must needs make men to say, "This is the finger of God." Providence appoints the meeting, and wonderfully brings matters about for the keeping of it. 1. Oftentimes sin finds the sinner unexpectedly and surprisingly when they are not looking for it. 2. Often does the way which sinners take to hide their sin prove the way of its finding them out. 3. Sin always finds out the sinner securely, that there is none escaping, no getting beyond it, but the sinner is hedged in on every side. 4. God's writing the sin upon the punishment, so that the sinner shall be forced to say, "As I have done, so God hath required me." Thus God makes men's sins so to find them out, that they cannot fail to see that He remembers such a sin against them. Sometimes the punishment is the same in kind with the sin: as in the case of Adoni-bezek. Sometimes

there is a visible likeness between the sin and the punishment. The Sodomites burned with lust, and God sends fire and brimstone on them to burn them to ashes. Sometimes there is a certain relationship betwixt the sin and the punishment. Jeroboam's hand withering, the belly of the adulteress swelling, and her thigh rotting. Finally, sometimes there is a direct contrariety betwixt the sin and the punishment. Thus God threatened the Israelites: "Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies, which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things; and He shall put a yoke of iron on thy neck, until He have destroyed thee." Adam would be like God, and he became like the beast that perisheth. I shall now confirm the doctrine. Here consider—1. That no man can sin without witnesses. This has been already illustrated under the third head. 2. Consider that God both can and will make sin find out the sinner. How then can the sinner escape? Many a time atrocious crimes escape among men, because such as would cannot find them out, and such as can will not do it. But there is neither cannot nor will not with God in this case. (1) God can do it. For He hath everything necessary to qualify Him to find out the guilty. He is privy to the most secret wickedness. (2) God will do it. For He hath said it, His truth is engaged for it. (3) It lies upon God's honour to make sin find out the sinner. (4) History and observation afford abundant testimony to this grand truth, in the events that have appeared and do appear in the world in all ages. Many a practical commentary has Providence written on our text in the shame and ruin of many a man and woman; although the brightest piece of it is reserved to be written out at the last day, when thousands of blanks that are in it shall be filled up. (*T. Boston, D.D.*)

Sin finding the sinner out:—I. Inquire WHAT IT IS TO BE FOUND OUT BY SIN. The expression is singular as well as striking, and means to be overtaken by convictions; to be alarmed, and brought under a sense of condemnation and danger, on account of sin. A man may be said to be thus found out when he feels the awful consequences of sin in his conscience, when his peace is disturbed by the recollection of his iniquities, when he feels the fatal sting of them in his soul. When a man's sins find him out, convictions fasten as a worm upon his mind; and conscience, though before unheeded, or perhaps silenced and kept down by numberless worldly cares and pleasures, rises up, as it were, with renewed vigour and tormenting energy, and at length forces the sinner, with wretched Ahab, to exclaim, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" The sinner is made alive to the evil of sin. The effects of sin, as they frequently overtake the sinner in this world, are generally serious and painful; but, considered in a more extended view, as reaching through eternity, and as having to do with our everlasting doom in the world of spirits, they must be unutterably awful. They are not only ruinous to a man's present peace, and injurious to the body, but pernicious, fearfully pernicious, to the soul. Oh, let us think of our sins while we are privileged to hear the sound of a Redeemer's name! Let us implore forgiveness while mercy exhibits to our view the atoning blood of the Cross! II. THE CERTAINTY OF THIS FINDING OUT.

III. To ILLUSTRATE THE TEXT, BY ADVERTING TO THE TIMES AND OCCASIONS WHEN MEN ARE USUALLY FOUND OUT BY SIN. 1. Sin is sometimes made suddenly to overtake and find out the sinner by an unexpected stroke of Providence. One circumstance often calls up another to remembrance, or discovers events with which it is connected, involving crimes and guilt which have been long buried in concealment, and long time escaped detection. How singular and striking the case of the brethren of Joseph! 2. Sin finds men out at the time of conversion. 3. That sin fails not to find out the sinner, if not sooner, at least in the day of adversity, sickness, and death. (*J. Jacques, B.A.*)

The punishments of the wicked:—Experience proves that the punishments visited upon an iniquity are often greater than the advantages or pleasures which that iniquity could possibly have secured. A man gains £50 by forgery, and his whole life becomes an utter wreck. A youth rejoices for a moment in the indulgence of his appetites, and consequences of a lifelong duration are entailed on him. Sometimes, also, the punishments are delayed until long after the actions occasioning them are forgotten. This is not infrequently the case. Years roll away, and the transgressor settles down quietly and respectably in life. The calm joys of home, the lapse of time, the eagerness for new pursuits, have obliterated from his memory the recollection of the long-gone sin, when suddenly up rises, from the dark background and abyss of the past, the grim spectre of an unavoidable retribution. A doctor once

asked a man dying of cancer, whether he could recollect ever having done an injury to the breast in which the cancer had formed. "Yes," he replied: "some thirty years ago I had a heavy fall, which sorely bruised this breast." "That fall of thirty years ago," said the doctor, "is the occasioning cause of your cancer now." So is it with the cancerous consequences caused by sin. They repose silently for many years, and then, long after the occasioning iniquity is forgotten, they break forth in fatal, calamitous, irrepressible malignity. Terrible, slow, subtle, long-delayed, are the punishments accorded to sin in this present life; and no transgressor can ever be quite sure that the remote, perhaps forgotten, iniquity of long ago will not, ere life is over, be punished by exposure, shame, and ruin. And these long-delayed punishments often come, not by degrees and after many warnings, but suddenly and with violence. At the meridian of the brightest summer day the avalanches come down irresistibly, overwhelmingly. Moreover, it is not active and heinous misdoings alone whose footsteps are thus dogged by the pursuing Nemesis. Extravagance, rashness, folly, negligence, procrastination, are often attended by terrible consequences. Most people have their opportunity in life, and every man his day. But if the day is unused, it cannot be recalled. And daily experience teaches that there is a certain bound and limit to imprudence and misbehaviour and negligence which, being transgressed, there remains no place of repentance in the natural course of things. Every life, like every year, has its cycle of seasons, and when the season is passed it is for ever and irrecoverably gone. Moreover (and the consideration is of serious moment), the punishment for neglecting opportunity or for committing iniquity is final. Considered in their temporal duration, the punishments visited upon vice and negligence are everlasting. Nor does it make the smallest difference to the fact and the certainty of these consequences whether we believe in them or not. Men may ignore consequences, but consequences come all the same. Considerations such as these appear to shed some light upon the vexed question of punishments after death. By thoughtfully reflecting upon the method of God's dealings here and now, men may fairly conjecture what will be the method of God's dealings with them hereafter, seeing that the same Unchangeable God presides over the destinies both of the embodied and the disembodied man. And, in this present world, we find that mere folly, wilfulness, feebleness of will, want of exertion, entail consequences almost as pernicious as those which attend upon actual transgression. We find, moreover, that the plea of ignorance or inexperience does not avert the retributions which await the transgressor. So, to this extent at least, the misdoings and the negligences of man's mortal state may be punished everlastingly, in that eternity may prove too short for the full undoing of the ravages inflicted on the soul, by wrongs committed or duties omitted, during the temporary period of its habitation in the body. And if this be so—if the same principles which permeate natural punishments in this world extend to the punishments of the world to come—then it follows not only that the disbelieving or the ignoring of these punishments will neither moderate nor avert them, but also that habits of disbelief may induce practical neglect of laws, resulting in heavy retribution. Pain and suffering are facts which doubters may discuss or condemn, but can neither prevent nor divert. The belief in future punishments has an evident and direct tendency to diminish those punishments, and even to lead to an escape from them altogether, inasmuch as it assists in prevailing upon men to avoid the causes of evil upon which the tread of punishment follows; whereas doubt of, or disbelief in, future punishment tends toward a recklessness of living calculated to make hell in life here, even if hereafter there were no life in hell. (*J. W. Diggie, M.A.*)

Sin never forgotten:—Let a man try to forget any dreadful thing of which he hates the remembrance, and the more he tries to forget it, the more surely he remembers it, the more he bodies it forth, and every thrust he makes at it causes it to glare up anew, reveals some new horror in it. Doubtless, this peculiarity in our mental constitution is destined to play a most terrific part in the punishment of men's sins in eternity; for there can be nothing so dreadful as the remembrance of sin, and nothing which men will strive with more intense earnestness to hide from and forget, than the recollection of their sins; and yet every effort they make at such forgetfulness only gives to such sins a more terrible reality, and makes them blaze up in a more lurid light to the conscience. Oh, if they could but be forgotten! But the more intense is the earnestness of this wish, the more impossible becomes the forgetfulness, the more terribly the dreaded evil stands out. There are cases, even in this life, in which men would give ten thousand worlds, if

they possessed them, could they only forget; but how much more in eternity! The man that has committed a secret midnight murder, how often, think you, though perhaps not a human being suspects it, would he give the riches of the material universe, if he had them at command, could he but forget that one moment's crime! But it is linked to his very constitution; and every time he tries to cut the chain, he does but rattle and rouse the crime out of its grave into a new existence. (*G. B. Cheever, D.D.*) *Life's mistakes*:—We sleep, but the loom of life never stops; and the pattern which was weaving when the sun went down is weaving when it comes up to-morrow. He who is false to present duty breaks a thread in the loom, and will find the flaw when he may have forgotten its cause. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Ver. 38. *Their names being changed.*—*Changes of name*:—Many persons live in names. This is fatal to the grasp of complete truth and relation. The poet asks, "What's in a name?" The name of a friend may be necessary to his identification, but the name is not the man. Character is to be studied, motive is to be understood, purpose is to be appreciated, then whatever changes may take place in the mere name, love and confidence will be undiminished. The change of names, both in the Old Testament and the New, deserves careful study. The name of Abram was changed, so was the name of Jacob, so was the name of Saul of Tarsus. Those changes of name symbolise changes of trust and vocation in life. The name should enlarge with the character, but the character should be always more highly valued than the name. The solemn application of this text is to the matter of great evangelical truths and doctrines. For want of attention to this matter, bigotry has been encouraged, and men have been separated from one another. Some persons do not know the gospel itself, except under a certain set of names, words, and stereotyped phrases. This is not Christianity, it is mere literalism; it is, in fact, idolatry, for there is an idolatry of phrase as well as of images. The truth is not in the letters which print it, the letters but stand to express the inexpressible. All life is symbolic. God has spoken in little else than parables. Revelation addresses the imagination, when imagination is used in its highest senses. It is not the faculty of mere cloud-making, but the faculty of insight into the largest meanings and the innermost relations of things. The letter in which you endeavour to express your love, is a poor substitute for the living voice and the living touch; it is indeed invaluable in the absence of the living personality; but what letter was ever written that quite satisfied the writer when love was the subject and devotedness the intention? There is a change of names that inspires the soul with hope. God is to give His servants a new name in the upper world; their name is to be in their foreheads; but in the changing of the name there is no changing in the burning love and the rapturous adoration. (*J. Parker, D.D.*)

CHAPTER XXXIII.

VERS. 1, 2. *These are the journeys.*—*The journeys of Israel*:—This chapter gives a very graphic and instructive picture of a much larger scheme of journeying. The local names may mean nothing to us now, but the words "departed," "removed," "encamped," have meanings that abide for ever. We are doing in our way, and according to the measure of our opportunity, exactly what Israel did in this chapter of hard names and places mostly now forgotten. Observe, this is a written account: "And Moses wrote their goings out." The life is all written. It is not a sentiment spoken without consideration and forgotten without regret; it is a record—a detailed and critical writing, condescending to geography, locality, daily movement, position in society and in the world. It is, therefore, to be regarded as a story that has been proved, and that will bear to be written and re-written. The one perfect Biographer is God. Every life is written in the book that is kept in the secret place of the heavens. "All things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Nothing is omitted. The writing is plain—so plain that the blind man may read the story which God has written for his perusal. Who would like to see the book? Who could not write a book about his brother

that would please that brother? Without being false, it might be highly eulogistic and comforting. But who would like to see his life as sketched by the hand of God? "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant: for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified." "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions." What a monotony there is in this thirty-third chapter! This will be evident to the eye. The reader sees but two words or three, and all the rest are difficult terms or polysyllables unrelated to his life. The terms are "departed," "removed," "went." The language of actual life is a narrow language which may be learned in a very brief time. So with our daily life: we rise, we sit, we retire; we eat and drink, and bless one another in the name of God; and go round the little circle until sometimes we say, "Can we not vary all that, and add to it some more vivid line? Has no friend of ours the power of flushing this pale monotony into some tint of blood?" Then we fall back into the old lines: we "depart" and "remove" and "pitch"; we "pitch" and "depart" and "remove"; we come and go and settle and return; until there comes almost unconsciously into the strain of our speech some expressive and mournful sigh. "Few and evil have been the days of Thy servant." Yet, not to dwell too much upon this well-ascertained fact, we may regard the record of the journeys of Israel as showing somewhat of the variety of life. Here and there a new departure sets in, or some new circumstance brightens the history. For example, in the ninth verse we read: "And they removed from Marah, and came unto Elim: and in Elim were twelve fountains of water, and threescore and ten palm trees." Sweet entry is that! It occurs in our own secret diaries. Do we not dwell with thankfulness upon the places where we find the waters, the wells, the running streams, the beautiful trees, and the trees beautiful with luscious fruitage? Then comes the fourteenth verse: "And they encamped at Rephidim," &c. Such are the changes in life. We have passed through precisely the transitions here indicated. No water; nothing to satisfy even the best appetences of the mind and spirit; all heaven one sheet of darkness, and the night so black upon the earth that even the altar-stairs could not be found in the horrid gloom; if there was water, it had no effect upon the thirst; if there was bread, it was bitter; if there was a pillow, it was filled with pricking thorns. There is another variety of the story; the thirty-eighth verse presents it: "And Aaron the priest went up into mount Hor at the commandment of the Lord, and died there." Is that line wanting in our story? All men do not die on mountains. Would God we may die upon some high hill! It seems to our imagination nearer heaven to die away up on the mountain peaks than to die in the low damp valleys. Grante! that it is but an imagination. We need such helps: we are so made that symbol and hint and parable assist the soul in its sublimest realisations of things Divine and of things to come. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Moses' diary of travels and its teachings*:—God wished the people to remember these journeys; and He wishes all ages to know of them and to learn from them. Let us notice a few of the lessons God intends these journeys to teach us. I. THEY IMPRESS UPON US THE GREAT FACT OF GOD'S CONTINUED PRESENCE AND INTEREST IN HUMAN LIFE. II. THEY POINT OUT TO US THAT GOD IS THE ONE TRUE AND SAFE GUIDE THROUGH LIFE. III. THEY PRESENT TO US A PICTURE OF HUMAN LIFE, AND THUS TEND TO GIVE US CORRECT VIEWS OF LIFE. IV. THEY SHOW TO US THAT THE GREATEST EVILS OF LIFE AND ITS ONLY DANGERS COME FROM SIN. V. THEY SUGGEST THE COMFORTING THOUGHT THAT BY TRUSTING IN GOD AND FOLLOWING HIM WE ARE SURE TO POSSESS THE INHERITANCE WHICH HE HAS PROMISED HIS PEOPLE. (*D. Lloyd.*) *The itinerary of Israel from Egypt to Canaan*:—I. AN INCENTIVE TO OBLIVION TO GOD. 1. Emancipating them from bondage in Egypt. 2. Repeatedly delivering them from their enemies. 3. Infallibly guiding them in their journeys. 4. Constantly providing for them in the desert. 5. Inviolably guarding them from dangers. II. AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO OBEY AND TRUST GOD. He is unchangeable; therefore His past doings are examples of what we may expect Him to do in the future. History, properly studied, will be the nurse of faith and hope (comp. Psa. lxxviii. 3-8). III. A MONITOR AGAINST SIN. 1. Man's proneness to sin. 2. God's antagonism against sin. 3. The great evil of sin. (*W. Jones.*) *The travels of Israel*:—This is a review of the travels of the children of Israel through the wilderness. It was a memorable history, and well worthy to be thus abridged, and the abridgment thus preserved, to the honour of God that led them and for the encouragement of the generations that followed. Observe here—I. How THE ACCOUNT WAS KEPT (ver. 2). "Moses wrote their goings out." When they began this tedious march God ordered him to keep a journal or diary, and to insert in it

all the remarkable occurrences of their way, that it might be a satisfaction to himself in the review and an instruction to others when it should be published. It may be of good use to private Christians, but especially for those in public stations, to preserve in writing an account of the providences of God concerning them, the constant series of mercies they have experienced, especially those turns and changes which have made some days of their lives more remarkable. Our memories are deceitful, and need this help, that we may "remember all the way which the Lord our God has led us in this wilderness" (Deut. viii. 2). II. WHAT THE ACCOUNT ITSELF WAS. It began with their departure out of Egypt, continued with their march through the wilderness, and ended in the plains of Moab, where they now lay encamped. 1. Some things are observed here concerning their departure out of Egypt, which they are minded of upon all occasions as a work of wonder never to be forgotten. 2. Concerning their travels towards Canaan, observe—(1) They were continually upon the remove. When they had pitched a little while in one place, they departed from that to another. Such is our state in this world: we have here no continuing city. (2) Most of their way lay through a wilderness, uninhabited, untracked, unfurnished even with the necessities of human life, which magnifies the wisdom and power of God, by whose wonderful conduct and bounty the thousands of Israel not only subsisted for forty years in that desolate place, but came out at least as numerous and vigorous as they went in. At first they pitched in the edge of the wilderness (ver. 6), but afterwards in the heart of it. By lesser difficulties God prepares His people for greater. We find them in the wilderness of Etham (ver. 8), of Sin (ver. 11), of Sinai (ver. 15). Our removes in this world are but from one wilderness to another. (3) That they were led to and fro, forward and backward, as in a maze or labyrinth, and yet were all the while under the direction of the pillar of cloud and fire. He led them out (Deut. xxxii. 10), and yet led them the right way (Psa. cvii. 7). The way God takes in bringing His people to Himself is always the best way, though it does not always seem to us the best way. (4) Some events are mentioned in this journal, as their want of water at Rephidim (ver. 14), the death of Aaron (vers. 38, 39), the insult of Arad (ver. 40); and the very name of Kibroth-hattaavah, "the grave of the lusters" (ver. 16), has a story depending upon it. Thus we ought to keep in mind the providences of God concerning us and our families, us and our land, and the many instances of that Divine care which hath led us and fed us and kept us all our days hitherto. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*)

Vers. 50–56. **Ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you.—The expulsion of the Canaanites:—**I. THE IMPERATIVE COMMAND. 1. To utterly expel the inhabitants of Canaan. 2. To completely destroy all idolatrous objects and places. 3. To equitably divide the land. 4. The authority by which they were to do these things. II. THE SOLEMN WARNING. 1. Those whom they spared would become their tormentors. "Under these metaphors," says Dr. A. Clarke, "the continual mischief that should be done to them, both in soul and body, by these idolaters, is set forth in a very expressive manner. What can be more vexatious than a continual goading of each side, so that the attempt to avoid the one throws the body more forcibly on the other? And what can be more distressing than a continual pricking in the eye, harassing the mind, tormenting the body, and extinguishing the sight?" "That which we are willing should tempt us we shall find will vex us." 2. The God whom they disobeyed would disinherit them. (*W. Jones.*) **The danger of allowing sin:—**The Israelites were now on the confines of the land of promise. So God speaks to them about the future, tells them what it was His will that they should do when they enclosed the land of promise, and what would be the consequence of disobedience. These, then, are the two points which we may consider—Israel's calling, and the consequences of neglecting it. I. ISRAEL'S CALLING. This was to drive out all the inhabitants of the land, to dispossess them, and themselves to dwell in it. If we view this with reference to the inhabitants themselves, we must regard it as the righteous judgment of God upon them on account of their sins. But we may also regard this visitation with reference to Israel, and then it will become evident that it was necessary for their safety. The Israelites themselves were so prone to fall away from God that their being surrounded by many idolatrous and degraded nations would be sure to lead them gradually away from Him. They would soon cease to be a separate people—a people consecrated to Jehovah. That little word "all" is very expressive. It shows that the judgment was to be universal. It proved the greatness of God's care for Israel. It was also the test of Israel's

obedience; and it was a test, we know, which they did not stand. They substituted a partial for an unreserved obedience, and drove out some, but not all, the inhabitants of the land. We find a long list of Israel's defects of obedience in Judges i. 21. Now, in this, as in so many other points, Israel's calling is typical of the Christian life. In what way? We often take Canaan to be a type of heaven. Yet it is easy to see that there are many points in which Canaan was no type of heaven; and one of these evidently was that whereas in heaven there will be no sin, no enemies, no temptations, in Canaan all these existed. In this point of view, then, Canaan was not a type of heaven, but rather of the Christian life now; and to that command, "Drive out all the inhabitants of the land, and dispossess them," we shall find an analogous one, descriptive of the Christian calling, "Put off the old man with his deeds." There is a principle of evil, called in Scripture the "old man," which comprehends sinful desires and evil habits; and this we are called to dispossess of the land. The old man is daily to be put off, the new man to be put on. The old man, though nailed to the cross, is never utterly extinct until the earthly house of our tabernacle is exchanged for the "building of God, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." The new man requires to be constantly strengthened by fresh gifts of the Spirit of God. When, then, God says, "Drive out all the inhabitants of the land," it has a meaning for the Christian; and its meaning virtually is, "Mortify the old man," crucify the whole body of sin. Do not spare any sin. Let all be resisted and overcome. Now, the old man is in no sense the same in every Christian. It is the principle of sin, the principle of self. In whatever heart it is, its nature is the same; but in other aspects it is not always the same—for instance, it is not always the same in its power. In one Christian it prevails much, in another more believing and watchful heart it is kept under control. Then, again, it is made up of different elements, and the elements which constitute it are not always the same in their proportions. Thus, the chief element in one case will be pride, in another self-righteousness, in another hypocrisy, in another vanity, in another temper, in another impurity. Sometimes two will appear together in intimate alliance, and those not infrequently two very opposite evils. In endeavouring, then, to carry out the injunction, "Drive out all the inhabitants of the land," it is important, on the one hand, that we should be aware of the element of the old man which is most prominent in it; and, on the other, that we should never forget that our besetting sin is not the only evil against which we have to contend, but against the old man as a whole. II. THE CONSEQUENCES OF NEGLECTING THIS CALLING. We see it in Israel. They did not fulfil the command, "Drive out all the inhabitants of the land." Most of the tribes allowed some to remain, whom they brought under tribute; in fact, with whom they made a league. The consequence was that those few inhabitants, though not powerful, caused them constant trouble; sometimes they seized an opportunity to attack them again; still oftener they proved a snare to them by leading them into sin, so that in the expressive language of Scripture they were "pricks in their eyes, and thorns in their sides." Thus Israel's sin was made their punishment. They spared those whom they ought not to have spared, and they suffered terribly in consequence. All this bears upon the Christian's life. There is a deep mystery in the spiritual life. How wonderful it is that there should be two principles—two natures in perpetual warfare with each other in the Christian's heart—the one of God, the product of the Spirit, the other of Satan, the result of the Fall; the one the ally of God, holding communion with Him, the other allied with the powers of darkness, an enemy in the camp ever ready to open the gates! It seems to be God's purpose not to put His people at once and for ever beyond the reach of temptation, but to exercise their faith and patience, and to show the power of that Divine principle which His own grace has put into their hearts. Do not, then, be cast down when you are deeply and painfully conscious of this inward conflict. Take it as God's appointment. Remember that it is to prove you, and that God proves you in mercy, to make you more than conqueror. But there is another point of view in which we must look at this. There are many cases in which this painful severity of conflict is owing, in great measure, to previous unfaithfulness to God. Suppose a person to have indulged in some sinful habit at any period of his life; it may be a want of truth, or impurity, or in any other sin, though the power of that sin will be broken by the entrance of the Spirit of God into the heart, yet it will cast its shadow long after it. The habitual sins of the unrenewed man are the snares and temptations of the renewed man. There is much of practical warning in this solemn truth. If ever you are tempted to indulge any sinful thought in your heart, remember that

that indulgence will certainly find you out again. God may, in mercy, forgive it; but if He does so that act of unfaithfulness will bring bitterness into the soul, will prepare the way for new conflicts and temptations. We should cast ourselves wholly on Jesus for the forgiveness of all past and present sins, and for strength to drive out "every inhabitant of the land"—the old man, with all his deceitful lusts. (*G. Wagner.*)

Thoroughness:—The subject is evidently thoroughness. Do the work completely—root and branch, in and out, so that there may be no mistake as to earnestness—and the result shall be security, peace, contentment; do the work partially—half and half, perfunctorily—and the end shall be disappointment, vexation, and ruin. Causes have effects; work is followed by consequences. Do not suppose that you can turn away the law of causation and consequence. Things are settled and decreed before you begin the work. There is no cloud upon the covenant, no ambiguity in its terms. He is faithful who hath promised—faithful to give blessing and faithful to inflict penalty. There was so much to be undone in the Canaan that was promised. It is this negative work which tries our patience and puts our faith to severe tests. We meet it everywhere. The colonist has to subdue the country, take down much that is already put up, root out the trees, destroy the beasts of prey, and do much that is of a merely negative kind, before he begins to sow corn, to reap harvests, and to build a secure homestead. This is the case in all the relations of life. The weed is not the green thing on the surface; that is only the signal that the weed is underneath. The work that has to be done is a work of eradication. The weed must be torn up by its every fibre. The theory of the Bible is that it has to encounter a human nature that is altogether wrong. It is not our business, at this point, to ask how far that theory is true. The Bible itself proceeds upon the assumption that "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way"; "There is none righteous, no, not one"; "God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions"; "there is none that doeth good, no, not one"; the whole head and the whole heart are not righteous or true before God. That being the theory of the Bible, see what it proposes to do. What iconoclasm it must first accomplish! How it must swing its terrific arms in the temples of our idolatry and in the whole circuit of our life, breaking, destroying, burning, casting out, overturning, overturning! What is it doing? It is preparing; it is doing the work of a pioneer; it is uttering the voice of a herald. Mark the audacity of the book! It speaks no flattering word, never uncovers before any man, bids every man go wash and be clean. A book coming before society with so bold a proposition must expect to be encountered with resolute obstinacy. If we suppose that we are ready-made to the hand of God, to be turned in any direction He is pleased to adopt, we begin upon a false basis; our theory is wrong, and our conception will lead us to proportionate disappointment. God has to do with a fallen intelligence, an apostate heart, a selfish will; and therefore He undertakes much negative work before He can begin constructive processes. What a temptation there is, however, to reserve something. Point to one instance in all the Biblical history in which a man actually and perfectly accomplished the Divine will in this matter of destruction. A good deal of destruction was accomplished, unquestionably; but was there nothing left? "What meaneth, then, this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" The temptation to reserve something is very strong. In many a life great improvement takes place without eradication being perfected. We are not called in the Bible merely to make great improvement. That is what we have been trying to do by our own strength and wit, and which we have always failed in doing. Nowhere do the sacred writers encourage us to make considerable advance upon our old selves. The exhortation of the Bible is vital. Suppose a man should have been addicted to the meanest of all vices—the vice of lying, the vice that God can hardly cure—suppose such a man should lie less, is he less a liar? Suppose he should cease the vulgarity of falsehood and betake himself to the refinement of deceit, has he improved? Rather, he has aggravated the first offence—multiplied by infinite aggravations the conditions which first constituted his character. So we are not called to great improvements, to marvellous changes of a superficial kind; we are called to newness of birth, regeneration, the washing of the Holy Ghost, the renewal—the re-creation of the inner man. If not, punishments will come. If you will not do this, "those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell"; they will tease you, excite you, irritate you; they will watch for the moments of your weakness, and tempt you into apostasy. (*J. Parker, D.D.*)

Unexpelled sin a thorn in the side :—Every one can trace in his own life how one unconquered sin becomes a thorn in the side. For ours also is commonly but a half-completed conquest. We have not made war upon our sin, in its fastnesses and breeding-places, in the lurking-places of thought and of our habitual tone. We did not believe that happy was he who dashed the little ones against the stones; we did not grapple and put an end to the young things that grow up to be strong and subduing sins. We were not remorseless, did not rouse ourselves to take stern and extreme measures. But it is not enough to let sin alone so long as it does not violently molest us. If we know our own hearts at all, we know that sin may be lodging in them, and gathering strength, without making incursions that visibly devastate the life. And so it has come true in our experience that God has not driven out what we would not rouse ourselves to drive out, and our sin has become a thorn in our side. Again and again that thing we would not slay makes us cry out before God that life is not worth having if it is to be life with this sin. We may learn to wear the thorn under our garment, and go about smiling, as if there were not terrible havoc being made of our peace with God; we may wear it as the ascetic wears his spiked girdle under his frock; but it is there, reminding us by pain and misery and weakness of our slackness in cleansing our life. One sin thus excepted and overlooked cleaves to us and makes itself felt in all our life: not a day passes but something occurs to give it occasion; it is a thorn in our flesh, carried with us into all companies, cleaving to us at all times; our one inseparable; exasperating, saddening, heart-breaking in its pertinacity. (*Marcus Dods, D.D.*)

CHAPTER XXXIV.

VERS. 1-15. *When ye come into the land of Canaan.—The Promised Land* :—
 I. THE BOUNDARIES OF THIS LAND WERE DETERMINED BY GOD. 1. A reason for contentment. 2. A rebuke of selfish greed, whether on the part of individuals or of nations. II. THE EXTENT OF THIS LAND WAS SMALL. Mr. Grove thus speaks of its size, and briefly sets forth its boundaries: "The Holy Land is not in size or physical characteristics proportioned to its moral and historical position, as the theatre of the most momentous events in the world's history. It is but a strip of country about the size of Wales, less than a hundred and forty miles in length and barely forty in average breadth, on the very frontier of the East, hemmed in between the Mediterranean Sea on the one hand and the enormous trench of the Jordan valley on the other, by which it is effectually cut off from the mainland of Asia behind it. On the north it is shut in by the high ranges of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, and by the chasm of the Litâny, which runs at their feet, and forms the main drain of their southern slope. On the south it is no less enclosed by the arid and inhospitable deserts of the upper part of the peninsula of Sinai, whose undulating wastes melt imperceptibly into the southern hills of Judæa." III. THE POSITION OF THIS LAND WAS SECURE. It was surrounded by natural fortifications. In one particular only was the position of this land perilous. "The only road by which the two great rivals of the ancient world could approach one another—by which alone Egypt could go to Assyria and Assyria to Egypt—lay along the broad flat strip of coast which formed the maritime portion of the Holy Land, and thence by the plain of the Lebanon to the Euphrates." This road was undoubtedly a dangerous one for the Israelites. And through this channel the destruction of the nation came at length. But, with this exception, this land was naturally surrounded by almost impregnable defences. IV. THE SOIL OF THIS LAND WAS FERTILE. At present the face of the country presents a rocky and barren aspect. For this there are two causes. "The first is the destruction of the timber in that long series of sieges and invasions which began with the invasion of Shishak (B.C. circa 970), and has not yet come to an end. This, by depriving the soil and streams of shelter from the burning sun, at once made, as it invariably does, the climate more arid than before, and doubtless diminished the rainfall. The second is the decay of the terraces necessary to retain the soil on the steep slopes of the round hills. This decay is owing to the general unsettlement and insecurity which have been the lot of this poor little country almost ever since the Babylonian conquest. The terraces once gone, there was nothing to prevent the soil which they supported being washed

away by the heavy rains of winter; and it is hopeless to look for a renewal of the wood, or for any real improvement in the general face of the country, until they have been first re-established." V. THE ISRAELITES FAILED TO TAKE POSSESSION OF THE WHOLE OF THIS LAND ASSIGNED TO THEM BY GOD. (W. Jones.) *Boundaries* :— Life is marked all over with boundary lines. Two different views may be taken of such lines—that is to say, in the first place they may be regarded as limitations and partial impoverishments, or, in the next place, they may be regarded as defining rights and liberties, possessions and authorities. Very subtle and delicate things are boundaries oftentimes. They are invisible. Are not all the greatest things invisible, as well as the best and most delicate and tender? Show the line of love. There is no line to show. It is at this point that conscience comes into active play. Where the conscience is dull, or imperfectly educated, or selfish, there will be much dispute about boundaries; but where the conscience is sanctified by the power of the Cross and is alive with the righteousness of God, there will be no controversy, but large concession, noble interpretation, willingness to give, to take, to arrange and settle, without the severity of the law or the cruelty of the sword. What differences there are in boundaries! We read of one, in the seventh verse, whose boundary was "from the great sea"; in the twelfth verse, "the goings out of it shall be at the salt sea." There is so much sea in some people's limited possession. What a boundary is the inhospitable sea! We cannot cut it up into acres, and lay it out; we cannot sow it with wheat, and reap the harvest, and enjoy the bread; it is to most of us but a spectacle—great, melancholy, unresponsive, pitiless; a liquid emblem of cruel death. Is not this the case with many men? They know they have great possessions, but their greatness is not the measure of their value. A little garden-plot would be to some men more valuable, for purposes of living, than the freehold of the Atlantic. Sometimes men are born to great estates that have nothing in them—boundless nothings; a proprietorship of infinite bogs and wastes and unanswering sterilities; sand that cannot be ploughed, water that cannot be sown with seed, and bogs that cannot be built upon. Contrast with such allotments the words of music which you find in the fifteenth verse: "toward the sun-rising." That is an inheritance worth having! The morning sun blesses it: early in the morning all heaven's glory is poured out upon it with the hospitality of God; whatever is planted in it grows almost instantly; the flowers love to be planted there; all the roots of the earth would say, "Put us in this place of the morning sun, and we will show you what we can do in growth and fruitfulness; give us the chance of the sun, and then say what we really are." We cannot all have our estates "toward the sunrising"; we cannot wholly cut off the north and the north-east—the shady side of the hill: somebody must be there. Does God plant a tabernacle in such sunless districts? Is there any temple of God in the north-lands, where the storm blows with a will and the tempests seem to have it all their own way, rioting in their tumultuous strength, and, as it were, accosting one another in reduplications of infinite thunderings and roarings of whirlwinds? Even there God's footprint may be found. Even a little may be so held as to be much. Quite a small garden may grow stuff enough for a whole household. Look for the bright spots; add up all the excellences; totalise the attractions of the situation; and it is wonderful how things add up when you know how to add them. Boundary is disciplinary. Who would not like to add just one more shelf to his library, and could do it if he were at liberty to take the books from another man's study? Who does not desire to have just the corner plot to make the estate geometrically complete, and would do it if the owner of the plot were not looking? But to retire within your own boundary!—to have nothing but a ditch between you and the vineyard you covet! Who is stopped by a ditch? To have nothing but one thin, green hedge between proprietorship actual and proprietorship desired! Why not burn the hedge, or transfer it? "Whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him," saith the proverbs of Solomon. To be kept within our own lines, to build our altar steadily there, and to bow down at that altar and confess that "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof," and that, whether a man has much or little, he may be God's child, God's servant, and Christ's apostle—that is the highest discipline, and it is possible to every man. Boundaries are suggestive. Every boundary, rightly interpreted, means, "Your last estate will be a very little one—a grave in the cemetery, a tomb in the silent place." Does it come to this, that the man who wanted acres a thousand in number doubled lies down in six feet, or seven, by four? Can a carpenter measure him for his last house? Does there come a time when a man steals quietly upstairs with a two-foot measure, and after-

wards hurries out to build for him in the eventide his last dwelling-place? It is impossible to exclude this thought from all our best reasoning. There is no need to be mawkish, sentimental, foolishly melancholy about it; but there is the fact that there is an appointed time to man upon the earth as well as an appointed place to man upon the earth, and that he is the wise man who looks at that certain fact and conducts himself wisely in relation to it. Men have the power of closing their eyes and not seeing the end; but to close the eyes is not to destroy the inevitable boundary. Even the grave can be made beautiful. A man may so live that when he is laid in his grave other men may go to see the tomb and bedew it with tears, and even stoop down and touch it with a loving hand as if it were a living thing. (*J. Parker, D.D.*)

CHAPTER XXXV.

VERS. 1-8. Give unto the Levites . . . cities to dwell in.—*The Levites' inheritance*.—1. Cities were allowed them with their suburbs (ver. 2). They were not to have any ground for tillage; they needed not to sow or reap, or gather into barns, for their heavenly Father fed them with the tithe of the increase of other people's labours, that they might the more closely attend the study of the law, and might have more leisure to teach the people; for they were not fed thus easily that they might live in idleness, but that they might give themselves wholly to the business of their profession and not be entangled in the affairs of this life. (1) Cities were allotted them that they might live near together, and converse with one another about the law, to their mutual edification; and that, in doubtful cases, they might consult one another, and in all cases strengthen one another's hands. (2) These cities had suburbs annexed to them for their cattle (ver. 3); a thousand cubits from the wall was allowed them for out-housing to keep their cattle in, and then two thousand and more for fields to graze their cattle in (vers. 4, 5). Thus was care taken that they should not only live, but live plentifully, and have all desirable conveniences about them, that they might not be looked upon with contempt by their neighbours. 2. These cities were to be assigned to them out of the possessions of each tribe (ver. 8). (1) That each tribe might thus make a grateful acknowledgment to God out of their real as well as out of their personal estates; for what was given to the Levites was accepted as given to the Lord, and thus their possessions were sanctified to them. (2) That each tribe might have the benefits of the Levites dwelling among them to teach them the good knowledge of the Lord. Thus that light was diffused through all parts of the country, and none left to sit in darkness (Deut. xxxiii. 10). They shall teach Jacob Thy judgments. Jacob's curse on Levi's anger was, "I will scatter them in Israel" (Gen. xlv. 7); but that curse was turned into a blessing, and the Levites, by being thus scattered, were put into a capacity of doing so much the more good. It is a great mercy to a country to be replenished in all parts with faithful ministers. (*Matthew Henry, D.D.*) *The Levite's home*.—The history of this tribe of Levi is fraught with many lessons for Christian workers. They were selected for the priesthood of the children of Israel, and on that account were separated from the rest of their brethren, and God ordained that they should have no inheritance among the children of Israel, and reminded them that God was their inheritance. But it is well for us to remember that it was not always so. At the commencement of their history this tribe of Levi lay underneath a curse (Gen. xlix. 5). But there came in the history of the tribe a crisis. Moses had ascended to the top of the hill, and during his forty days' absence the children of Israel made a molten calf, and bowed down to the idol. Moses came down from the hill-top, and at once standing amid the camp he shouted, "Who is on the Lord's side, let him come over to me"; and all the tribe of Levi gathered themselves together unto Moses. It was the turning-point in their lives, they seized their opportunity, and from that time they were the tribe whom God chose for His service. But the call to Levi was not simply a call to privilege, it was a call to work. God calls not to idleness. When once you feel the consecrated hand of God laid upon you, you may be sure that He has work for you, and He has already commanded the help you need. And from that time that special characteristic of the tribe of Levi, which had in former times led them into sin, now is purified by God for His own special service. What was that cha-

racteristic? If I were to sum it up in one phrase, it would be this—intense sociability. Their very name, Levi, signifies the joined ones. It was this yearning for companionship which led Levi to join himself to the bloodthirsty Simeon, and to reap the vengeance which Jacob perpetuates upon his death-bed. It is a very important characteristic; it is a characteristic which the Christian ministry needs, which every individual Christian ought to possess. A Christian man should be a man of intense sympathy, and have his tendrils going forth to all around him. But there is another characteristic which is equally necessary to a true and faithful servant of God. And it is to produce this characteristic that God's dealing with the children of Levi seems to be bent, namely, the power to stand alone. And not until these two characteristics are blended together is the Levite fit for the service of God. These are the true Christian servants—men who are ready to go forth to all, and yet men who are able, bravely, to take their stand alone, because they are joined to God. And now I want you to think of this one ordinance laid down with regard to these men, namely, the provision God had made in this chapter for their homes. We might have imagined it would have been better, as God had appointed this tribe to be workers for Him, for them to live about the temple of Jerusalem, so that they might be at hand to minister within its sacred courts. But no, God lays down the distinct command that this tribe of Levi, which He has chosen for His own peculiar service, should be scattered among the tribes. There were four or five centres in every tribe where these Levites were to dwell. What is the reason of this strange provision? I think it was made partly for the sake of the people, and partly for the sake of the Levites. It was in the first place, because of the people. In the wilderness the children of Israel were not likely to forget God. They had the tabernacle in their centre; the pillar of cloud or fire was always to be seen in the very middle of the camp. But when they became settled down in the promised land, and received their promised inheritance, then indeed they would be scattered abroad, and then would arise the danger lest they should forget the Lord their God. And, therefore, God ordained that their teachers should go and live in the very midst of them, because He wanted to bring religion to their homes. And this, I believe, is God's law, that His people should go and scatter themselves; not simply settle down in some place, but actually go and let their light shine before men even in the very darkest places of the earth. But if the provision was made for the tribes, I think it was actually made for the Levites. If they had all been gathered together at Jerusalem, these Levites would consider that their work began, continued, and ended in their attendance at the ordinances of the sanctuary; and God wanted to show them, as His ministers, they were not simply to deal with the sanctuary, but with the home life of His people—to carry His religion into their various towns and villages. Further than that, by thus scattering them in these different tribes, God provides here that they may learn that their homes are not to be simply for themselves, but they are to be, as it were, cities of refuge. And this ought to be a picture of our homes. Not only would God scatter us as Christian men and women throughout the nations of the world, but each one of you has your home, and you want it to be a place where there shall be fellowship—a true Hebron. True, the Christian man's home is in the midst of this world with all its defilements; but it is a home of fellowship, it is a royal city, where Jesus Christ reigns as King. (*E. A. Stuart, M.A.*)

Vers. 9-44. Ye shall appoint you cities, to be cities of refuge for you.—*The cities of refuge*:—I. The position of the homicide exposed to the stroke of the avenger is a TYPE OF OUR POSITION IN OUR SIN. Few positions in the drama of life could be more tragic than that of the manslayer as he looks upon his victim and turns to flee with the speed of desperation to the nearest of the refuge cities. And is our case any the less tragic—difficult as it may be to realise it? Is there any sin we have done that is not pursuing us, or whose stroke will be lighter at last than that of the avenger of blood? No law is so sure as that of retribution. II. The position of the manslayer with the city of refuge before him is a TYPE OF OUR POSITION BEFORE THE CROSS. III. The position of the manslayer within the city of refuge is a TYPE OF OUR POSITION UNDER THE SHELTER OF THE CROSS. 1. His safety lies in his remaining within the city. In proportion as a man forgets Christ, the avenging power of sin will find him out and bring darkness on his soul. 2. On the death of the high priest the manslayer may safely leave the refuge (ver. 28). For then the arm of the avenger is arrested, and the whole land becomes as a city of refuge to the homicide. And was it not because in after years the death of God's great High Priest

should set men free from the condemnation of their sin? Here for the first time we find a hint of a greater sacrifice than bullock or goat—a hint that He who is High Priest is also Himself the sacrifice. (*W. Roberts, M.A.*) *The cities of refuge*:—I. THEIR DESIGN. 1. The first object aimed at in them was undoubtedly to save the condemned. The gospel is everything to a sinner, or it belies itself, it is nothing. It is either “a cunningly devised fable,” a mockery of human woes, or it is a great remedy in a desperate case, an antidote for a mortal poison, help in a total wreck, life for the dead. 2. These cities had, however, a second end in view—they were undoubtedly intended to uphold and honour the Divine law. The Lord Jesus Christ humbled Himself and died to “magnify His law and make it honourable”; to show His creatures, in the very utmost stretch of His love, how “glorious He is in holiness,” how determined to do or give up anything rather than suffer one of His commands to fail, rather than suffer the authority of His eternal statutes to be even suspected. Nothing establishes His law, nothing honours it, like His gospel; nothing goes half so far in proving its unchangeableness; the destruction of a universe could not have clothed it with such an awful glory. II. We come now to the second point we proposed to consider—THE MEANS BY WHICH THE PROTECTION OF THESE CITIES WAS OBTAINED. 1. The manslayer was, in the first instance, to enter one of them. It is one thing to have the name of Christ in our ears and on our lips, and another to have Christ Himself in our hearts, “the hope of glory.” 2. But it was not enough for the manslayer to enter the city of refuge; to secure his permanent safety, we are told in this chapter that he must abide in it. Within its walls he was safe; a step out of them, he was once more at the avenger’s mercy. And here we have another spiritual lesson taught us—the sinner who would be saved by Christ, must not only actually apply to Him for salvation, but must abide as a suppliant at His feet to his dying hour. And here we must stop; but the partial view we have taken of this ancient institution will remind us of the care which God manifested in it of two gracious objects. The first is the safety of the transgressor who seeks his safety in the way which God has prescribed. Another object secured in the appointment of these refuges, was the encouragement of the trembling offender. (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *The cities of refuge*:—I. THE NAMES OF THE CITIES SELECTED AS PLACES OF REFUGE HAVE BEEN OBSERVED TO CONVEY, IN THE ORIGINAL HEBREW, SOME ALLUSION TO THE OFFICES WHICH CHRIST BEARS TO HIS CHURCH, and will therefore demand our primary consideration. The name of the first city was Bezer in the wilderness, in the plain country of the Reubenites, which name, in the Hebrew language, means a stronghold, or fortified place, eminently calculated as a shelter to the distressed fugitive. The agreement between the name of this city and the office which the Lord Jesus Christ bears for His people, as their refuge and defence, may be very interestingly traced by observing the expression used, in reference to this subject, in Zech. ix. 12, where the same radical word is used: “Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope.” Thus Christ is called a fortress, a place of defence for His people. The name of the second city was Ramoth, in Gilead, of the Gadites, which signifies high, or exalted, as though the fugitive manslayer when within the walls of the city, was raised out of danger into a place of security. Under the same radical word we find God saying, “I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people (Psa. lxxxix. 19). And “Him,” declares St. Peter, “hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour” (Acts v. 31). His seed are therefore not only a saved people, saved with a present salvation, but they are also raised up together with Him, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. The third city was Golan, in Bashan, of the Manassites, a name implying joy, or revelation, a suitable description of the frame of that person’s mind who had escaped the avenger’s sword, and fitly portraying Him who is eminently the joy of His people. The above three cities were upon the other, or eastern, side of the river Jordan; and when the children of Israel were settled in the land of Canaan, the Lord, through Joshua, directed them to appoint three more cities of refuge on this, the western side of the river (see Josh. xx.). Accordingly they appointed Kedesh, in Galilee, in Mount Naphtali, whose name signifies holy, or set apart, which, in fact, all these cities were; for no avenger of blood dared to enter those sanctuaries in order to retaliate for the injury inflicted. As Kedesh, the holy city, was a sacred refuge to the unwitting manslayer, so Jesus, the Holy One of Israel, is a sanctified defence to His people. Again, the name of the fifth city of refuge was Shechem, in Mount Ephraim, a word signifying a shoulder, expressive of a power and readiness to bear burdens, and used in reference to magisterial and regal authority. Thus it is

prophesied, concerning the Messiah, "The government shall be upon His shoulder" (Isa. ix. 6). And respecting the typical Eliakim, it was declared, "The key of the house of David will I lay upon His shoulder: so He shall open, and none shall shut; and He shall shut, and none shall open" (ibid. xxii. 22). The last-named city, called Kirjath-arba (which is Hebron), in the mountain of Judah, a name signifying fellowship, or association. As the fier from vengeance shared in the privileges of the city of refuge, and dwelt as one with the inhabitants thereof, so those who have fled to Jesus for refuge dwell in communion with Him and with all His saints: they have fellowship with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ, and have access unto Him at all times. II. THEIR CONVENIENCE FOR THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH THEY WERE SELECTED. 1. They were so situated that there was scarcely any part of the land of Israel more remote than a day's journey from some one of these cities, so that the distance was not too great for any one to escape thither. Placed, through the length of the land, on each side of the river Jordan, facility was thus afforded for crossing the river, if occasion required it, while the territory between the northern and southern boundaries of the country were regularly subdivided by them; the distance from the south border to Hebron, from Hebron to Shechem, from Shechem to Kadesh, and from Kadesh to the north border of the land, being nearly equal. 2. The way of access to these cities was also to be kept perfectly free from obstacles; as Moses commanded (Dent. xix. 3). The gospel is a highway, "the way of holiness: the unclean shall not pass over it; but the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein" (Isa. xxxv. 8). Is not, then, the access to our refuge easy and plain? And, further, all the obstacles which the law, our depraved nature, and the machinations of Satan had placed in the way, have been graciously removed by our merciful Forerunner and High Priest. 3. It may be observed, also, in connection with this part of our subject, that these cities of refuge were in the inheritance of the priests and Levites (see Josh. xxi.); so that the unhappy manslayer might there receive the consolations of religion, and enjoy communion with those who were specially set apart for God's service, the immediate attendants upon the altar. This may also be considered as an interesting and typical allusion to Him, who not only shelters from wrath and judgment, but guides our feet into the way of peace, enriches our souls with spiritual knowledge, and gives everlasting consolation, and good hope, through grace. 4. Lastly, we may remark, that all these cities were situated upon hills; thus serving to direct the distressed person who was fleeing thither, and to encourage him with the hope that, although the last part of his flight was up hill, he would soon be in a place of safety. A striking comparison, this, of Him whom "God hath exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins," who, though once obscure and despised, is now highly exalted; who affirmed, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me"; and who now sends forth the saviour of His name into all lands, declaring that "whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." III. THE SAFETY WHICH THEY AFFORDED. If once the unintentional manslayer entered into any one of these cities, the avenger of blood had no power to smite or kill him. Thus it is written in Joshua (xx. 4-6), "When he that doth flee," &c. When we remark the particular directions given concerning these cities, and the repeated allusions made to them in various parts of Scripture, we may surely be warranted in concluding that they were, equally with other parts of the Jewish law, of a typical character. As such, therefore, we see in them an eminent type of the protection which Jesus affords to the distressed sinner, who is fleeing from the curse of the law, the penalty of death, and the wrath of God. No other prospect of relief is held out to the penitent transgressor, but in Christ. He is appointed by God the Father as the only way of escape from Divine vengeance. (R. S. Eaton, B.A.) *The Divine guardianship of human life*:—The various provisions of this law afford an impressive illustration of the Divine regard for human life. I. IN THE INSTITUTION OF THE CITIES OF REFUGE AS A PROVISION THAT THE LIFE OF AN INNOCENT PERSON SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN AWAY. The adaptation of these cities for this purpose appears in—1. Their accessibility from all places. A reference to the map of Canaan will show that these cities were so situated that one of them could be reached in a few hours from any part of the country. 2. Their accessibility to all persons. "For the children of Israel, and for the stranger." God's regard is not simply for the life of the Israelite, but for the life of man as man. II. IN THE LAWS BY WHICH THE TRIAL OF THE MANSLAYER WAS TO BE CONDUCTED. The Divine guardianship of human life is manifested in these laws at least in two respects. 1. In the clear discrimination between intentional and unintentional

manslaughter. "If he smite him with an instrument," &c. (vers. 16-24). 2. In the absolute necessity for the evidence of at least two witnesses before a man could be adjudged guilty of murder. One witness might be mistaken in his view of the case, or might be prejudiced against the homicide; hence the importance of the testimony of at least two witnesses in the trial of such cases. III. IN THE PUNISHMENT OF THE INTENTIONAL MANSLAYER. "The murderer shall surely be put to death" (vers. 16, 17, 18, 21, 30). As an evidence of the regard of God for human life, this punishment has additional weight from two facts. 1. It could not be averted by any ransom. The crime was too heinous to be expiated by anything less than life itself. 2. It was insisted upon for the most solemn reason. The argument seems to be this: that the shedding of human blood defiled the land, that such defilement could be cleansed only by the blood of the murderer; that the Lord Himself dwelt in that land, and therefore it must be kept free from defilement; if the murder were committed, the murderer must be put to death. To spare the life of a murderer was to insult Jehovah by defiling the land wherein He dwelt. IV. IN THE PUNISHMENT OF THE UNINTENTIONAL MANSLAYER. When it was proved on the trial that the manslayer was perfectly free from guilty designs, that he had slain another entirely by accident, even then he had to bear no light punishment. He must leave his estate and worldly interests, his home and his family, and dwell in the city of refuge. His dwelling there closely resembled imprisonment; for if he left the city, and its divinely appointed suburbs, the Goël, if he should come upon him, was at liberty to put him to death. 1. Respect human life—that of others, and your own also. 2. Guard against anger; for it leads to murder, and in the estimation of Heaven it is murder. 3. Cultivate brotherly kindness and Christian charity. (*W. Jones.*)

Security in Christ:—The son of a chieftain of the Macgregors was killed in a scuffle at an inn on the moors of Glenorchy, by a young gentleman named Lamont. The manslayer mounted his horse and fled, and though sharply pursued, in the darkness of the night succeeded in reaching a house. It happened to be the house of Macgregor himself. "Save my life!" cried Lamont to the chieftain, "men are after me to take it away." "Whoever you are," replied Macgregor, "while you are under my roof you are safe." Very soon the pursuers arrived, and thundered at the gate. "Has a stranger just entered your house?" "He has; and what may be your business with him?" "The man has killed your son! Give him up to our vengeance!" The terrible news filled the house with lamentation; but the chief with streaming tears said, "No; you cannot have the youth, for he has Macgregor's word for his safety, and as God lives, while he is in my house he shall stay secure." This story has been told for centuries to illustrate Higland honour. What shall we say of the older story, that illustrates Divine love? To Jew and Gentile, high and low, rich and poor, friend and enemy, the grace of Christ is free.

Hasting from danger:—Can you be safe too soon? Can you be happy too soon? Certainly you cannot be out of danger of hell too soon; and, therefore, why should not our closing with Christ, upon His own terms, be our very next work? If the main business of our life is to flee from the wrath to come, as indeed it is (Matt. iii. 9), and to flee for refuge in Jesus Christ, as indeed it is (Heb. vi. 18), then all delays are highly dangerous. The manslayer, when fleeing to the city of refuge before the avenger of blood, did not think he could reach the city too soon. Set your reason to work upon this matter; put the case as it really is: I am fleeing from the wrath to come; the justice of God and the curses of the law are closely pursuing me; is it reasonable that I should sit down in the way to gather flowers or play with trifles? For such are all other concerns in this world, compared with our soul's salvation. (*J. Flavel.*)

The nearest refuge:—As the manslayer, being to haste for his life unto one of the cities of refuge, was ordered to flee unto that city which was nearest to him, so it is the duty and privilege of the poor sinners, when they see their miserable condition, to haste immediately unto Christ, the great Saviour; and unto that in Christ, which they have the clearest discerning of, and so, in that regard, is the nearest unto them as being a suitable relief for that part of their misery which most sensibly affects them. And thus some souls, being most sensibly touched with the guilt and filth of sin, have a more clear revelation of the blood of Christ, in its excellency and suitableness to cleanse from all sin, and are enabled to haste unto this, as the immediate refuge set before them. Other souls are more sensible of their misery, as naked creatures, and have a more clear discovery of Christ as a suitable, glorious remedy, in regard to His righteousness, and these are enabled to run in His name, "The Lord our Righteousness," as the refuge that is next or most immediate unto them. And

others, who have a more general sense of their misery, have a more general revelation of Christ's excellency, and are enabled to flee unto Him for refuge, as a complete Saviour that is every way suitable to their case. Though the distinct actings of faith on Christ in all these vary, yet in the main they agree, inasmuch as it is one Christ that is believed on for justification and life. They all flee unto Christ for refuge, and so are all safe, though one flees unto Him under one consideration, and another under another, according to that revelation they have of Him as suitable to their case. For though the soul's first actings of faith on Christ may more peculiarly respect one of His distinctive excellences than the rest, yet all are implied—faith acts towards a whole Christ. And those of His excellences, which were not at first so distinctly viewed and acted towards by the soul, are afterwards more fully discovered, and particularly dealt with. (*Dutton on Justification.*)

CHAPTER XXXVI.

VERS. 1-13. **Let them marry to whom they think best ; only to the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry.**—*The law for the marriage of heiresses :—*I. THE CASE STATED (vers. 1-4). These proceedings of the heads of this family were orderly, respectful, reasonable, and commendable. II. THE CASE ADJUDICATED (vers. 5-9). 1. The righteousness of the case was acknowledged. 2. The difficulty of the case was removed. 3. The decision in this case was made the law for all similar cases. 4. The decision of this case was of Divine authority. III. THE ADJUDICATION ACTED UPON (vers. 10-12). "They married their father's brothers' sons. By this it appears," says Matthew Henry—"1. That the marriage of cousin-germans is not in itself unlawful, nor within the degrees prohibited, for then God would not have countenanced these marriages. But—2. That ordinarily it is not advisable ; for, if there had not been a particular reason for it (which cannot hold in any case now, inheritances being not disposed of as then by the special designation of Heaven), they would not have married such near relations. The world is wide, and he that walks uprightly will endeavour to walk surely." (*W. Jones.*) *Marriage :—*1. That marriage is a Divine institution. 2. That the obligations involved in marriage are binding and sacred. I. THAT PERSONS SHOULD NOT BE COERCED IN MARRIAGE. 1. Personal choice as opposed to compulsion. 2. Personal affection as opposed to mere convenience. II. THAT THERE ARE IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS WHICH SHOULD REGULATE THE CHOICE IN RESPECT TO MARRIAGE. 1. As to property. 2. As to consanguinity. 3. As to health. 4. As to suitability. 5. As to character. (*Ibid.*) *Sensible marriage :—*No laws, however excellent, express, or multiplied, can reach every particular case which may arise ; and still room will be left for the exercise of sound judgment and common sense. But when these are regulated according to the true meaning of the Word of God, and in dependence on Divine teaching, they will guide us through all perplexities, as far as our immediate duty is concerned. Yet the Lord frequently leaves us to feel our difficulties, that we may be habituated to reflect, to search the Scriptures, and to trust Him more simply. All our inclinations ought to be subjected to the will of God : and in contracting marriage, future consequences to posterity, as well as to ourselves and our connections, should be taken into consideration. The Scriptures indeed suppose that esteem, affection, and preference are requisite in this important relation : but they know nothing of that irrational, ungovernable, and idolatrous passion, which, regardless of all consequences, and in defiance all authority, rushes headlong upon gratification ; which is neither moderated by discretion, nor subordinated to the will of God ; which is not rational esteem, nor tender friendship, nor congenial affection, but something vastly more rapturous, unintelligible, and undefinable : and which, with all its refinements, is inconsistent with common sense, the interests of society, the happiness of domestic life, and the Christian religion. Finally, though it is prudent to foresee and prevent disputes about temporal property, it would be better if we were equally quicksighted and attentive in respect of our spiritual and eternal interests. But "the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." (*Thomas Scott.*)



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